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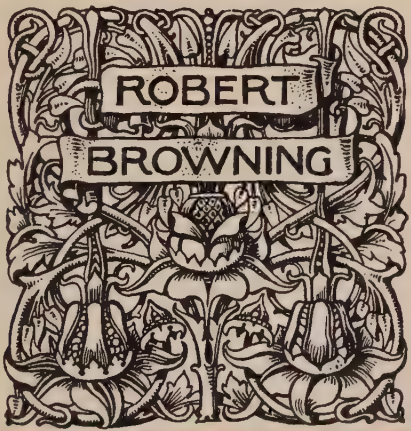
THE RETURN OF THE DRUSES

A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON

COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY

LURIA — A SOUL'S TRAGEDY

The Return of the Druses
A Blot in the 'Scutcheon
Colombe's Birthday
Luria
A Soul's Tragedy

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# THE RETURN OF THE DRUSES
# A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON
# COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY
# LURIA — A SOUL'S TRAGEDY

BY

## ROBERT BROWNING

From the Author's Revised Text

*Edited with Introductions and Notes by*

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"The Return of the Druses," conventional in "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon" and "Colombe's Birthday," political in "Luria" and "A Soul's Tragedy;" but in all it is fused with the narrower movement of plot and character betraying it, by a dramaturgy distinguishing the structure as well as the general effect of these plays from the work of preceding dramatists.

Within the last decade there has been a tendency in modern novels and plays to make use of some part of the material which the life of Christ offers the literary artist. But neither Sudermann in his "Johannes," nor the Belgian-French narrators of picturesque Biblical episodes, nor the American and British novelists who have either re-told the story of Jesus, or re-imagined it under the mask of some kindred life, have ventured to treat the idea of divine incarnation in so broad a manner, co-ordinating it with similar racial ideas, as Browning did, nearly sixty years ago, in "The Return of the Druses."

The dramatic material of this play may be broadly characterized as that furnished by the idea of the Incarnation. The action turns upon the conception of the Hakeem held by the Druses and the Christians in the play; and, more essentially, upon the sceptical conflict of this conception in the minds of the inner group of characters, Loys, Djabal, and Anael, with their personal emotional experience of love. The counter influence of these two forces upon these three central personalities determines the action through the relations of the characters to one another, and thus governs the course of their lives and the outcome of the plot.

In the first act, the exultation of the initiate Druses, swayed by the fervor of their implicit belief in the

Hakeem and in their deliverance through him, finds the gross outlet proper to it. This Khalil's purer and more strenuous faith is able to deflect in the interest of the plot now opening out before the audience. Loys' return, just as their Prefect is coming back to the net the conspirators have spread for him, foreshadows in its instant effect upon Khalil and Ayoob the action of an alien against their schemes, one whose Christian ideas run counter to their conception of the Hakeem, and whose whole influence will affect the plot more vitally than they can possibly suspect, not merely through the news he brings, but through his dawning love for Anael, which will, indeed, delay him from telling his news till the fourth act precipitates it. The embarrassment they feel Loys may be to them is obvious at once, in Karshook's stealthy proposal to stab him ; Khalil's more humane policy saves him to make trouble for them and preserve the dramatist an essential element of influence in his play, much as, in Shakespeare's " Julius Cæsar," Brutus's humane method with Mark Antony saved Cæsar's champion to make trouble for the anti-Cæsar party, and preserve an important factor in the after-plot.

With Djabal and with Anael the second act shows the conflict going on between the conception of the Incarnation they consider themselves bound to accept and the personal experience of love through which each is passing. To Djabal it is a contest between the obligations forced upon him by the labors of a lifetime — all leading the way events are now pulling him as fatally as if they were not of his own causing — and a new loyalty to truth, begotten in him by the very love whose loss he fears must be the price of his fidelity to its light. He grows beneath the shaping

hand of his own requirements. Although not strong enough to meet them fully, his love for Anael helps him so far that he decides to refrain from satisfying his love for her, and to forego his vengeance for his family's wrongs, if so he may preserve intact her love for him. The clarifying frankness of Loys is his main dread. When he learns that he has returned, the more imminent danger is the influence of his scorn upon the belief of the Druses. To Anael the conflict is between an imagined divine love and an actual human one for whose self-sufficingness she takes herself to task. The doubt she meets is within herself. The external doubts Djabal is fearing become for him a purifying process. For Anael the process of doubt is an illuminating one. For both, the opening in events pushing them to this discipline turns upon Loys's presence. Anael's scepticism drives her now to a test of the divinity she would fain accept. If the humanity she loves is divine, it may stand comparison with the undoubted humanity of Loys which has most incited her secret criticism. The plot thus proceeds another step. Anael, verifying by her interview with Loys not her faith but her doubt, is cast upon still another more desperate attempt to justify her creed. Loys, by his love and confidence in its return which this interview elicits, is brought into a similar position of conflict between his vows as a Christian knight and his loyalty to his actual experience. He goes to find some way to reconcile them. Anael seeks a last inspiration from Djabal before undertaking the secret assassination of the Prefect which is to constitute her second ardent test of faith. Djabal seeks a last farewell before following out his self-sacrificing resolve. Meanwhile the external events of the third act crowd to the fore in

this drama, and push the characters to action. These incidents are alone exciting enough to make up all the action of an ordinary play. The approach of the Prefect to his doom; the arrival, to follow on top of that, and in the midst of a successful revolt, of the Nuncio to assert his ineffective rule; and finally, the landing of the Venetian admiral to sanction the Druse success now poising in the tick of a minute's deed,— all this more external thread of plot-action is relentlessly pressing upon the cross-purposed plans of the three central characters which make up the second thread of character-action. Such character-action as this dominates only the intenser plays of Shakespeare, of which "Macbeth" is the most notable example. And this second thread of character-action is intermingled with still another, the like of which it would not be easy to find in dramatic work earlier than Browning's — the thread of larger social action, woven in this play of racial differences which before the persons of the play were born or its incidents set in train, predetermined the form of the religious idea of the Incarnation with which, in one way or another, both characters and plot are here brought into fruitful conflict.

This clash comes in the fourth act, through the dauntless intellectual energy and moral courage of Anael.

Djabal's new resolve has yielded before the ruthless march of events. Loys, also, has let events decide his course for him. Anael alone,— partly, by virtue of her supreme position at the heart of the events circling and intersecting about her, but mainly because she is worthy of her innermost place at the very *nodus* of the three interweaving threads of plot, character,

and social action, — that larger social action, namely, which in this play is religious, — Anael alone acts out with pure and pauseless ardor the dreadful deed her conscious spirit has decreed itself to do. And that deed — the killing of the Prefect, on which the freeing of her people, the exaltation of Djabal as the Hakeem, and the solution of her own doubts depend, unmasking Djabal to her, and leading her to abjure his falsity and ruin his cause by opening the great doors to his enemies and his unprepared friends, the uninitiate Druses, before his success is ripe, and which seems, in the fourth act, to have spoiled everything, is the very means of saving, in the fifth act, the whole dramatic action.

In the scheme of religion held by the Druses of the revelation of the divine to mankind, through the incarnation of the Hakeem, an attendant prophet, called the Hamza and typifying the Universal Intelligence, was essential to the completion of the revelation. This office of a representative mediating influence, capable of comprehending the divine and opening out the pathways of its operation among men, Anael fulfils in this drama. Mr. Gamaliel Bradford, Jr., referring in his paper on "The Return of the Druses," in "The Boston Browning Society Papers," to this idea of the Druses that the Universal Intelligence appeared at each successive incarnation of the Deity, says that it had occurred to him "that Browning may have had this in mind when he introduces Khalil in the play as the companion of Djabal, though I do not remember anything that would actually indicate it." There is, perhaps, nothing in the play to indicate that Browning himself had this in mind as a part of his own dramatic design; but there is a word in the play which

does indicate that he knew Khalil would be to others the obvious person to fill the office of Djabal's Hamza. This word is put in the mouth of one of the uninitiated Druses at the opening of the fifth act (line 8). In the hubbub of the various voices of the people tumultuously surging into the Hall, one of the snatches of talk rising to the top is, "But is Khalil to have the office of Hamza?" followed by the satirical rejoinder, "Nay, rather, if he be wise, the monopoly of henna and cloves." For the external part of the office of Hamza, the disinterested and faithful Khalil is indeed well fitted. But it is like Browning's subtle irony to make the popular voice settle upon Khalil as the representative of that Universal Intelligence whose human wisdom is so important a factor in the institution of each revelation of the Divine among men, giving to the *rôle* of passive credulity which Khalil plays throughout the piece the superior place clearly belonging to that one who performs in the action the real function of attesting strenuously an ardent and aspiring faith. Anael actually creates by her steadfast scepticism the situation signalized by the pouring of the mob into the palace, one of whom Browning makes thus unwitting of the source of the influence carrying him along with it.

So many "necessary questions" of the plays bearing on the interpretation of their artistic design considered as a coherent totality, press upon the perforcedly restricted space of these Introductions that many lesser points of artistic finish, as well as matters wider of the theme, must fall outside of the plan of critical elucidation of the work itself selected as most desirable for this edition. Yet, before passing on to a sketch of the poet's method of solving, in the fifth act,

his three interwoven plots of incidents and characters and religious progress, one of the powerful and felicitous metaphorical passages with which Browning gems his great crises may be briefly dwelt upon.

No one can withhold the thrill due to the splendid surprise of the situation when Djabal, expecting to consummate his fate and slay the Prefect, dashes the arras aside and sees Anael there. But only that reader who unifies the vital religious movement of the play with the movement of character and incident displaying it, or that actress of the modern drama who will some day rise to make the world see and feel its tragic force, can fully appreciate the deeply dramatic beauty of the curse wherewith the Human Intelligence in the person of this intensely real and loving Anael, delicate of flesh and overwrought of nerve, yet thrilled to the soul with the moral energy inspiriting her sickening deed, curses her inefficient God : —

> " Hakeem would save me. Thou art Djabal. Crouch!
> Bow to the dust, thou basest of our kind!
> The pile of thee I reared up to the cloud —
> Full, midway, of our fathers' trophied tombs,
> Based on the living rock, devoured not by
> The unstable desert's jaws of sand, — falls prone.
> Fire, music, quenched: and now thou liest there
> A ruin, obscene creatures will moan through."

The alternate breaking down over the physical horror of the blood, and crying out in weak dependence upon the Hakeem to sustain her with the sudden splendor of his divine strength, finds a rushing outlet for Anael's new-fledged independence in this uncompromising expression of an illusion recognized and abjured at one breath. The image called up is that of some gigantic rock-statue of a god fabled to echo with music and shine with sudden spiring flames, like the huge

and hoary stone of Jupiter Ammon, in the oasis of Siwah in the desert near Cairo, the seat of the founder of the Druse religion. Anael's faith had built up so against the sky, and girt about with dead symbols of her race's ideals, the mighty structure of a present Hakeem, sacred from the touch that shifts all humanly based permanence. Now she sees her idol crumble, and herself bids it down, to lie there, prowled about by beasts in most ignoble degradation. This desert-born metaphor is as vivid a flash of light on the crisis between the two lovers and on the religious movement which their relations to each other reveal, as Djabal's sudden discovery of Anael instead of the Prefect is to him, and in the more external illumination of the plot of incident.

At the close of this exciting act pushing thus mightily against Djabal's success, and ranging Loys openly, also, as a representative of the Cross, against the assumptions of the Hakeem, the issue is still held in suspense, just as it should be in a fourth act. Despite the Nuncio's arrival to reinforce the anti-Hakeem side of the plot, the scale dips Druseward again at the opening of the final act. The cunning attempts of the slippery prelate to sap the credulity of the Druses only evokes Djabal's fiery force of will against it. One magnetic instant suffices to rally the frightened Orientals, and the arrival of the Venetian fleet in the harbor is the argument potent to dishearten the well-nigh desperate wiles of the emissary from the Occidental Church. Again, all hangs upon Anael. She, the one Druse able to accuse Djabal, is the one Druse capable of transcending the potential Hakeemship within him and of centring about herself the events, the characters, and the religious movement of the

drama. The loyal Khalil himself defiantly unveils this traitorous Druse, and reveals — his sister. Loys, jubilant, renounces vows and birthright, and claims her love as his; but Djabal, loving as he never loved before, renounces life itself and every claim upon her but his just doom, thus working out in his own soul his purification. The culminating outcome of the play is ripe now for summing up, through Anael's insight, in her one last word, her revelation to men of the divine mystery of the Incarnation which is the motive of the drama — "HAKEEM!" Each interprets it after his own blind fashion. The Druses and poor Khalil, too, with his piteous prayer to Hakeem to restore his sister to life, all see in it the most unequivocal witness to Djabal's divinity. The Nuncio, well aware of the relativities governing the aspects of a power he also sees the practical force of here well enough, turns upon the men who seize him now, with the grimly humorous wish that they were at Rhodes. There another standard would authorize a different view of the situation. Djabal, about to declare the truth he is now strong enough of soul to confess publicly, sees suddenly in the look of those about him that they would falsely dress his true confession, and a new apprehension strikes him of the inner truth of his career as it stands — the uplifting office of the Hakeem, which he as man, without being Hakeem, has fulfilled. This, therefore, he expresses, finishing his work by deputing it to Khalil and to Loys, electrifying his tribe with the intense expression of his aim for them, just as the Admiral's entrance adds to the spectacle which the group presents; and then he does, in very deed, exalt himself finally in his death and free his soul to press toward Anael's.

The final effect of this religious over-plot is much as if the poet had worked out in dramatic embodiment a conflict between two ideas of the Incarnation, one believing, and one sceptical, in order to merge them in a third resultant idea still more deeply religious, and yet the riper fruit of scepticism ; such as he afterwards expressed in a lyrical form in the person of David, Renan, and a Third Speaker, in the Epilogue to "Dramatis Personæ." To Anael and to Djabal, at any rate, one may see in this drama how some such fruitage of their lives' stress and their minds' scrutiny came as to the "Third Speaker" in that Epilogue. Instead of their cruder belief or their awakened disbelief of any present efficacy and truth in an energy of loving deity, lost now in the deeps of a doubtful past, the presence of that energy was reaffirmed within themselves, —

> "Why, where 's the need of Temple, when the walls
> O' the world are that? What use of swells and falls
> From Levites' choir, Priests' cries, and trumpet calls?
> That one Face, far from vanish, rather grows,
> Or decomposes but to recompose —
> Become my universe that feels and knows."

It remained for Browning to put this condensation of movement in a religious idea in dramatic form, in a play trembling with the onrush of successive events, and mobile with the cross-play of human impressions, impulses, and influences.

"The Return of the Druses" illustrates the dramatic embodiment of a large socially significant over-movement more perfectly perhaps than any other of the plays in this volume, a fact which may justify the choice of it in this Introduction for so full a discussion. As a generic piece of Browning's dramatic workman-

ship, it is also noticeable for the completeness with which it incorporates with the underlying motive revealed through personality, the more usual stage interests of telling character-progression, and of mere plot — surprising situation and effective spectacle.

Only its stage-production by actors skilled in their art and capable of that appreciation of the evolution of literary art which the proper impersonation of such a play requires could fitly exemplify the rich opportunities it incidentally offers for those lightning strokes of gesture and expression, cleaving through the stage crust to the living mood of the moment, that in the theatre look so simple and are so perfectly premeditated. One instance: Anael is showing Djabal the blood on her dagger when she would have him claim as really his the deed he so unknowingly inspired her to accomplish. Her tone of eager, horror-struck, but almost child-like exposition of the fact: "His blood all this! — this!" must suddenly hush and change as her eyes catch sight of some ghastly spread of blood, unseen before, upon her bridal robes, to which she turns with a sidelong sweep of the delicate arm that still poises the dagger, as she adds, "and — and more!" with utter sickening breakdown of voice and bearing. "Sustain me, Djabal!" is her next cry, and then with clamoring desperation, "Wait not — now let flash thy glory!"

This tremendous scene of the enlightenment of Djabal — his "punishment," he calls it — through Anael's deed, and of her consequent disillusion, by his confession, from any faith in his supernatural powers, is, in some respects of stage action, a counterpart of the awful scene between Lady Macbeth and the Thane of Cawdor after Duncan's murder. Yet how thor-

oughly and unimitatively is it reconstructed on opposite lines by the most original English pupil of the great Elizabethan wizard! Here it is the man who has tempted the woman, though unwittingly, to the deed both desire accomplished, though from no selfish motive. Here, as also in "Macbeth," after it is done, the woman is the less deaf to the call of the outer world upon them both, and would persistently urge the man away from the apathy that holds him. While the fateful knocking at the castle-door shouts for concealment, Lady Macbeth frantically pulls at the benumbed man and hales him off to avoid detection. As if stirred to it by the warning of her own quick imagination and pure insight against the degradation of the imposture upon the people it professes to save, Anael, as soon as she knows the truth, regards the godship as worse than a ruin — a destined haunt of vileness "obscene creatures will moan through," and with voice and hand she sets upon Djabal, beseeching him, with all the might of her love, to reveal the truth publicly.

After this revelation of the instant spiritual courage of Anael, who is clearly the most glorious example of Browning's early power to create a woman nature unerringly intelligent in decision and uncompromisingly swift in action, it is hard to believe that Mr. Arthur Symons is right, admirable as his critical appreciation generally is, when he supposes that Anael, at the climax of the spiritual energy her repeated intrepidity must have induced in her character, denied her nature and abandoned her fiercely tested fealty to the truth, in order to deceive her people and serve her lover's baser tendency with her dying breath. Mr. Symons considers her cry, "HAKEEM!" to be a "divine and adorable self-sacrifice of truth," reminding one of

Desdemona's "Nobody: I, myself!" But this lovely lie of the super-subtle Venetian was a white lie. By it she forswore vengeance for a crime against herself, which, after all, attested the passion for her of a jealous lover. It was, moreover, a pitying lie, thoroughly in keeping with Desdemona's gentle nature and shrinking nerves as shown in the matter of her other lie about the handkerchief, and elsewhere throughout the play. And this, it is to be observed, is the main point, the question not being one of abstract morality nor of ideal preference as an act befitting a woman, but of dramatic truth to the character portrayed. It would be a direct contradiction to the whole tenor of the stopless course of this fiery strong-souled Syrian maiden if her final word was a knowing lie. The circumstances also involving socially and religiously so much more than in Desdemona's case would make such a lie not white but black. After all, it was her death, not her exclamation, that made the Druses grovel, and that could scarcely be intentional. The uncalculated effect of a genuine utterance accounts perfectly for the deception, dramatically fit and necessary to loosen all the knots of plot and character and religious motive. The contrast between Christian and Druse ideas is not left pointless by this interpretation, and the conflict between faith and doubt in the play is solved in a mode characteristic of Browning's view of human Love as the type of the divine, if Anael's exclamation is supposed to be for her the perception of a supreme truth, an intuitive vision flashed upon her shining eyes of the Divinity incarnate in the pure power of a human love so flawless as Djabal's has at last become.

The field of social movement is much narrower in "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon" and but a little less so

in "Colombe's Birthday." Love is still the master-motive of the action. In the "Blot," it overpowers conventional notions of Honor and Vengeance. In "Colombe" it struggles toward supremacy against the conventional habit of mind that exalts social rank and political dominion above it. But in both of these plays the love is personal, and, instead of running unitedly along with love shown in social service, as in "The Return of the Druses" to set free an enslaved people; and also with love shown as religious fervor, symbolically universal in its range and meaning, it is chosen to be shown as detaching itself from wide social relations — withdrawing from harsh contact with a troublesome world. Still, even in these plays in which personal love is isolatedly dominant, it is not presented without suggestive reference to that historic social atmosphere which distinguishes Browning's dramatic work in this volume from almost all dramatic work preceding his.

Instead of Browning's characters being "not in the world, but in some section cut out of it," as Professor Henry Jones declares, they are more largely related to a world-environment than the characters in a specific plot are wont to be. It is true that this larger world-environment is synthetically conceived and representatively or typically suggested. Not only character in the individual but characteristics of an epoch are presented as living processes having a flowing continuous unity. Therefore, although Browning himself may have a prevailing manner of interpreting life, it is not one so easy to define as people ordinarily suppose; and since it is, whatever else it may be, an interpretation of life, social and individual, as in flux, it is utterly impossible for him either to state or to make his charac-

ters embody the absolute moral teaching attributed to him by Professor Henry Jones and other writers on Browning's dramas.

The interest comes apparently nearer to being simply moral, in the ordinary sense of the word, in "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon" than in any other of these plays. "Honor" is the subject of the story for Lord Tresham, and his moral assumption and the reflex of his moral view and that of the world upon his young sister, Lady Mildred, and her youthful lover, Lord Mertoun, who try by an honestly meant deception to efface the blot their true but impassioned love has brought upon the escutcheon of the house of Tresham, brings all three to a tragic end. The successive steps that bring about the tragedy are the premature exposure of the secret intimacy of the lovers; the overwrought shame and self-reproach of Mildred, who refuses to incriminate the Earl by confessing his name; and the blind cry for vengeance of Tresham's traditional sense of family probity which hounds him on, after he knows the whole truth, to kill the Earl and poison himself.

The ideals of an English nobleman of the eighteenth century for his house are here depicted at their highest reach in a man of courteous and gentle nature and lofty aims, and then to this modern paladin of whatsoever things are lovely and of good report comes the maddening moment when the exclusive possession of virtue in his line may be questioned. Then the lurking slavishness of such a moral ideal is laid bare. Tresham, cultured of brain and conscience as he is, finds himself witlessly scourged by his family Eumenides, till he fancies the elemental forces of primitive nature have power to drive him about in his ancestral grounds,

pushing him with sinister suggestion to the deed he dreads but does. The "dells and bosky paths which used to lead" him, now bewilder him,—

> "The blackest shade
> Breaks up, the thronged trunks of the trees ope wide,
> . . . the very river put
> Its arm about me and conducted me
> To this detested spot. Why then, I 'll shun
> Their will no longer: do your will with me!
> . . . . . .
> Woods, river, plains, I catch your meaning now,
> And I obey you!"

Again, at the close of the same scene, the beauty of the passage that makes the hoary yew-trees of his park haunt the accomplished vengeance of this tortured nobleman, is a rare touch of poetic symbolism appropriately linking the woe of the archetypal house of Agamemnon with this modern Fury-ridden pride of family,—

> "Dear and ancient trees
> My fathers planted, and I loved so well!
> What have I done that, like some fabled crime
> Of yore, lets loose a Fury leading thus
> Her miserable dance amidst you all?
> Oh, nevermore for me shall winds intone
> With all your tops a vast antiphony,
> Demanding and responding in God's praise!
> Hers ye are now, not mine!"

Of the pathos of Mildred's self-accusation, the pitifulness of her one excuse —

> "I was so young, I loved him so, I had
> No mother, God forgot me, and I fell" —

much has been said. But how little of the angelic understanding of her last nobler words! Then, her enlightened spirit, advancing from its meeker posture of shame and penitence under the weight of the influ-

ence upon her of her brother's code, and her own native hatred of deception falls into the background of her past, and she fronts her lover's death and her brother's anguish with the strength that is able to help. The light of a higher judgment than that which has cursed her emboldens her dying lips "not to forgive" but "to bless" her wretched brother from her "soul of souls."

Mertoun, also liberated at last from the undue influence upon him of Tresham's example of all excellence to imitate, rightly gains a new manliness of judgment, and fervor of love, while his life is ebbing away beneath the yew-trees, to add to the high-mindedness so constrainedly expressed in his ceremonious visit of proposal for Mildred's hand, and the docile tenderness of the love-scene in Mildred's chamber.

Guendolen's loyal belief in her cousin has been well likened by Mr. Arthur Symons to Beatrice's defence of Hero in "Much Ado about Nothing;" but whether she comes up to Beatrice or not in the playful humor with which she lightens the tragic load of the play, she is evidently made after her own pattern and no other, except Balaustion or some modern woman not yet put in a book, in her rapid intuitions into character and motive. No wonder Mildred's apparently shameless guilt is transparent purity to her quick guess, and no wonder the obtuse, blundering, good English fellow, Austin, submits himself to her judgment. It is the best proof of his sense that he could furnish. Her penetrating intelligence is the real guaranty that she will know how to apply on occasion the warning Tresham's life embodies: "Vengeance is God's, not man's. Remember me!" It is an echo from "Hamlet," catching up the sonorous ancient phrase

from that marvellous drama of revenge as a family duty, to reverberate a newer message of individual responsibility. Of the unexacting and unobtrusive yet not unpersuasive morality of that message, this play can alone be justly convicted.

Over the conventional ideas belonging to a larger circle of life and rank, and spreading out in vista from a petty throne, in dispute, to the almost supreme dominion of a Germanic Cæsar of the seventeenth century, in prospect, love is victorious in "Colombe's Birthday." This is Browning's one flawlessly happy comedy of love. It is guiltless of a deeper sigh than that the candidate for Charlemagne's crown finds a moment to utter in pure envy of the happier lot of Colombe and Valence.

Whoever has seen Julia Marlowe Taber play the part of the girl-queen entering upon her kingdom of exuberant happiness in love, will want no other way than hers of telling the story of what happened on her birthday. As she played it, Colombe's part was to unfold like a flower in grace and love and joy as she more and more fully exercised and made known her clear perceptions of that rare evolution of power and love in Valence which she tested, and saw tested, and at last herself openly confirmed and ratified. She was never fooled into feeling, for example, in the love scene of the fourth act, that Valence really loved any other person than Colombe of Ravestein. The audience had, as the poet doubtless meant it should have, the same species of double pleasure that it has in the wooing scene between Rosalind and Orlando — the pleasure of seeing Valence fooled to the top of his desire — blissfully tested, tormented, and enticed, and the pleasure of seeing as clearly the tender love behind

the Duchess's mask of playful dignity luring him on to the unequivocal declaration in which she secretly glories.

Colombe's character is expanded by means of the action; but it is not also made to cause the action, as Anael's is. Her lover's character, however, is not only educed by the course of events, it is itself the centre of the activity of the play. Valence stands for the victory which the psychical force of a love capable of refining itself by every adverse or fortunate incident is predestined to win over the sluggish ability of Berthold, and the baser materialism of the courtier-group. On this intellectual and spiritual ardor of Valence Robert Taber set the due emphasis.

Valence's entrance upon the court-circle is that of a real man among men made puppets by their idle aims in life. These courtiers, whose limp hands fling the action into the advocate's earnest grasp, represent among themselves the various phases of polite low-mindedness possible to the materialistic view of life, without departing in the least — do they need to? — from the true patterns of every day. When they shift their irksome burden of telling the Duchess her bad news, they shift upon Valence's strong shoulders the burden of the triumph which is to accompany his growth of capacity under responsibility, and prove the superiority of spiritual energy over smug flesh and blood, and even over uninspired intellectual ability.

The plot centres still more closely upon a single personality in "Luria," the heart of the dramatic issue being even more bound up in the development of Luria than in that of Valence. The dramatist in Browning, shut out from stage display, is becoming one with the poet in him, and his hand is cramping its force to an artistic condensation of effects; the

union of dramatic and poetic capacity inventing a new mode for its activity in the great monologues to follow "this last attempt for the present at dramatic poetry." The interest, however, is not less far-reaching, and the historical-social atmosphere, already remarked as most fully exemplified in "The Return of the Druses," but not absent from "A Blot" or "Colombe," is again a noticeable element of this drama. The dramatic conflict of "Luria" is, in fact, between individual right and corporate exactions, between Luria and Florence. "A Soul's Tragedy" is, practically, a pendent piece, supplementing the larger drama by picturing the same general theme in other aspects. It has a similar political-social interest, and a corresponding individual and social conflict. It presents, however, a reverse phase of the issue between Luria and Florence, Chiappino being represented as subordinating the people to his ambitious welfare, as Florence, acting through Braccio is represented as subordinating Luria; and Chiappino's course of calculation based on selfishness and distrust of human nature being the counterpart of the Florentine policy against which Luria's enthusiasm and persistent policy of faith in good prevail.

"Luria," as a whole, has the peculiar interest of being virtually a criticism of Florence as a state. It incidentally demonstrates the strength and the weakness finally leading to the downfall of that singularly illustrious Italian city. Its warrant as criticism is to be found in the tedious details and combined showing of the facts of history, yet it is here enfolded in a brilliant poetic drama, with all the synthetic unity of a world-poet's insight into a multitudinous phenomenon.

The way in which this dramatic structure is built to afford views over these wide social horizons reminds

the reader of "Strafford," and especially of "The Return of the Druses." Not only is Braccio painted as the type and mouthpiece of Florence and the embodiment, as Professor H. M. Pancoast was the first to suggest, of the policy identified with Machiavelli, — not only are Domizia and Puccio made to represent characteristic Florentines, in the same way as in "Strafford" Pym and his party were identified with the People's movement, and Strafford with the Royal opposition, — but this whole play, "Luria," also suggests, as "The Return of the Druses" does, a conflict and contrast of racial ideals and tendencies. A synthesis of the Oriental habit of mind is brought into the Italian drama to supplement and perfect with its believing ardor the colder mental processes of the Occidental habitude. And this not simply in Luria's person, but in the conscious visions that inspire his course and straighten the tangles of the plot.

If Browning were stiff and unreal in these prodigious synthetic embodiments of historic epochs and racial or civic traits along with the interplay of character and impulsion of events; or if these new dramatic elements stood out over-prominently and failed to throw the human interest into higher relief, he might justly be censured for conquering a new domain at the expense of the old one. Yet the fact is that they have generally escaped remark because the art with which they have been presented is so anti-analytic, their welding with impersonation and plot so thoroughly animated.

The Bishop who orders his tomb at St. Praxed's Church, for instance, to take an accepted example, is none the less human, because Browning has had the dramatic skill plus the historic sense to portray the

Italian prelate as so perfectly typifying the characteristics of the Central Renaissance that a special student of the period must admiringly acknowledge the revivifying light of the poet's insight.

With the new effectiveness a new manner of workmanship is to be expected. Study of the diction and metaphors of Browning in the plays in this volume will reveal at once that there is a relation between the quality of the style and the exigencies of dramatic theme. The two plays in which the fervid Oriental element appears, "The Return of the Druses" and "Luria," are much warmer in hue and more impassioned in expression than "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon," which is full of specifically English turns of phrase and allusions; while "Colombe's Birthday," in its scenes of romantic purity, contrasts strongly with the snatches of careless colloquy belonging to its courtiers' dialogue, and may be again contrasted in its diction, as a whole, with the keen-eyed voluble style of Ogniben and the Italians of "A Soul's Tragedy."

It is obviously in keeping with the dramatic workmanship of one who portrays a sectional bit of life as related with larger phases to make his dramatic movement a humanized and fluent process, not more or perhaps as much dependent on external events as on internal or humanized events, and on the interplay of personal influences. So characteristic a difference in the conception of the life to be expanded in a plot involves a characteristic difference in the explication of its development through the *dramatis personæ*. In the Greek tragedies, for example, the usual process of plot-development is an on-rushing movement toward an almost mathematically conceived end, since the foreshadowed nemesis of the house decrees the predestined

issue. In Shakespeare the process is a balanced oscillating movement, rushing downward finally, as in "Macbeth," or rising, as in "The Tempest," toward some goal of reconciliation; since fate has grown, in Shakespeare's dramatic art, into the possession of a conscience, and has become subject to the law of moral choice. In Browning the northern nemesis of conscience has become still more modernized; it has grown under the influence of human desire into human energy, and therefore in Anael and Djabal, in Colombe and Valence, and in Luria, the development of character is an ascending, aspiring process.

It will probably be perceived in due time that it is not fair to say, as almost all writers on Browning's dramas have hitherto reproachfully said, that Browning centres his action in thought. He centres it rather in will. A more active force than action impels the course of his drama, and that is the initiation of action.

Charlotte Porter.
Helen A. Clarke.

THE

# RETURN OF THE DRUSES;

## A TRAGEDY.

1843.

*PERSONS.*

*The Grand-Master's* Prefect.
*The Patriarch's* Nuncio.
*The Republic's* Admiral.
LOYS DE DREUX, *Knight-Novice.*
*Initiated Druses* — DJABAL, KHALIL, ANAEL, MAANI, KARSHOOK, RAGHIB, AYOOB, *and others.*
*Uninitiated Druses.*
*Prefect's Guard.* *Nuncio's Attendants.* *Admiral's Force.*

TIME, 14—.

PLACE. — *An Islet of the Southern Sporades, colonized by Druses of Lebanon, and garrisoned by the Knights-Hospitallers of Rhodes.*

SCENE. — *A Hall in the Prefect's Palace.*

## ACT I.

*Enter stealthily* KARSHOOK, RAGHIB, AYOOB *and other initiated* Druses, *each as he enters casting off a robe that conceals his distinctive black vest and white turban; then, as giving a loose to exultation,* —

*Karshook.* The moon is carried off in purple fire:
Day breaks at last! Break glory, with the day,

On Djabal's dread incarnate mystery
Now ready to resume its pristine shape
Of Hakeem, as the Khalif vanished erst
In what seemed death to uninstructed eyes,
On red Mokattam's verge — our Founder's flesh,
As he resumes our Founder's function!
*Raghib.* — Death
Sweep to the Christian Prefect that enslaved
So long us sad Druse exiles o'er the sea!
*Ayoob.* Most joy be thine, O Mother-mount! Thy brood
Returns to thee, no outcasts as we left,
But thus — but thus! Behind, our Prefect's corse;
Before, a presence like the morning — thine,
Absolute Djabal late, — God Hakeem now
That day breaks!
*Karshook.* Off then, with disguise at last!
As from our forms this hateful garb we strip,
Lose every tongue its glozing accent too,
Discard each limb the ignoble gesture! Cry,
'T is the Druse Nation, warders on our Mount
Of the world's secret, since the birth of time,
— No kindred slips, no offsets from thy stock,
No spawn of Christians are we, Prefect, we
Who rise . . .
*Ayoob.* Who shout . . .
*Raghib.* Who seize, a first-fruits, ha —
Spoil of the spoiler! Brave!
[*They begin to tear down, and to dispute for, the decorations of the hall.*
*Karshook.* Hold!
*Ayoob.* — Mine, I say;
And mine shall it continue!
*Karshook.* Just this fringe!

Take anything beside! Lo, spire on spire,
Curl serpentwise wreathed columns to the top
O' the roof, and hide themselves mysteriously
Among the twinkling lights and darks that haunt
Yon cornice! Where the huge veil, they suspend
Before the Prefect's chamber of delight,
Floats wide, then falls again as if its slave,
The scented air, took heart now, and anon
Lost heart to buoy its breadths of gorgeousness
Above the gloom they droop in — all the porch
Is jewelled o'er with frostwork charactery;
And, see, yon eight-point cross of white flame, winking
Hoar-silvery like some fresh-broke marble stone:
Raze out the Rhodian cross there, so thou leav'st me
This single fringe!

*Ayoob.* Ha, wouldst thou, dog-fox? Help!
— Three hand-breadths of gold fringe, my son was set
To twist, the night he died!

*Karshook.* Nay, hear the knave!
And I could witness my one daughter borne,
A week since, to the Prefect's couch, yet fold
These arms, be mute, lest word of mine should mar
Our Master's work, delay the Prefect here
A day, prevent his sailing hence for Rhodes —
How know I else? — Hear me denied my right
By such a knave!

*Raghib* [*interposing*]. Each ravage for himself!
Booty enough! On, Druses! Be there found
Blood and a heap behind us; with us, Djabal
Turned Hakeem; and before us, Lebanon!
Yields the porch? Spare not! There his minions dragged

Thy daughter, Karshook, to the Prefect's couch!
Ayoob! Thy son, to soothe the Prefect's pride,
Bent o'er that task, the death-sweat on his brow,
Carving the spice-tree's heart in scroll-work there!
Onward in Djabal's name!

*As the tumult is at height, enter* KHALIL. *A pause and silence.*

*Khalil.* Was it for this,
Djabal hath summoned you? Deserve you thus
A portion in to-day's event? What, here —
When most behoves your feet fall soft, your eyes
Sink low, your tongues lie still, — at Djabal's side,
Close in his very hearing, who, perchance,
Assumes e'en now God Hakeem's dreaded shape, —
Dispute you for these gauds?

*Ayoob.* How say'st thou, Khalil?
Doubtless our Master prompts thee! Take the fringe,
Old Karshook! I supposed it was a day . . .

*Khalil.* For pillage?

*Karshook.* Hearken, Khalil! Never spoke
A boy so like a song-bird; we avouch thee
Prettiest of all our Master's instruments
Except thy bright twin-sister; thou and Anael
Challenge his prime regard: but we may crave
(Such nothings as we be) a portion too
Of Djabal's favor; in him we believed,
His bound ourselves, him moon by moon obeyed,
Kept silence till this daybreak — so, may claim
Reward: who grudges me my claim?

*Ayoob.* To-day
Is not as yesterday!

*Raghib.* Stand off!

*Khalil.* Rebel you?

Must I, the delegate of Djabal, draw
His wrath on you, the day of our Return?
*Other Druses.* Wrench from their grasp the fringe!
Hounds! must the earth
Vomit her plagues on us thro' thee? — and thee?
Plague me not, Khalil, for their fault!
*Khalil.* Oh, shame!
Thus breaks to-day on you, the mystic tribe
Who, flying the approach of Osman, bore
Our faith, a merest spark, from Syria's ridge
Its birthplace, hither! "Let the sea divide
These hunters from their prey," you said; "and safe
In this dim islet's virgin solitude
Tend we our faith, the spark, till happier time
Fan it to fire; till Hakeem rise again,
According to his word that, in the flesh
Which faded on Mokattam ages since,
He, at our extreme need, would interpose,
And, reinstating all in power and bliss,
Lead us himself to Lebanon once more."
Was't not thus you departed years ago,
Ere I was born?
*Druses.* 'T was even thus, years ago.
*Khalil.* And did you call — (according to old laws
Which bid us, lest the sacred grow profane,
Assimilate ourselves in outward rites
With strangers fortune makes our lords, and live
As Christian with the Christian, Jew with Jew,
Druse only with the Druses) — did you call
Or no, to stand 'twixt you and Osman's rage
(Mad to pursue e'en hither thro' the sea
The remnant of our tribe), a race self-vowed
To endless warfare with his hordes and him,
The White-cross Knights of the adjacent Isle?

*Karshook.* And why else rend we down, wrench up,
raze out?
These Knights of Rhodes we thus solicited
For help, bestowed on us a fiercer pest
Than aught we fled — their Prefect; who began
His promised mere paternal governance
By a prompt massacre of all our Sheikhs
Able to thwart the Order in its scheme
Of crushing, with our nation's memory,
Each chance of our return, and taming us
Bondslaves to Rhodes forever — all, he thinks
To end by this day's treason.
*Khalil.* Say I not?
You, fitted to the Order's purposes,
Your Sheikhs cut off, your rites, your garb proscribed,
Must yet receive one degradation more;
The Knights at last throw off the mask — transfer,
As tributary now and appanage,
This islet they are but protectors of,
To their own ever-craving liege, the Church,
Who licenses all crimes that pay her thus.
You, from their Prefect, were to be consigned
(Pursuant of I know not what vile pact)
To the Knights' Patriarch, ardent to outvie
His predecessor in all wickedness.
When suddenly rose Djabal in the midst,
Djabal, the man in semblance, but our God
Confessed by signs and portents. Ye saw fire
Bicker round Djabal, heard strange music flit
Bird-like about his brow?
*Druses.* We saw — we heard!
Djabal is Hakeem, the incarnate Dread,
The phantasm Khalif, King of Prodigies!
*Khalil.* And as he said has not our Khalif done,

And so disposed events (from land to land
Passing invisibly) that when, this morn,
The pact of villany complete, there comes
This Patriarch's Nuncio with this Master's Prefect
Their treason to consummate, — each will face
For a crouching handful, an uplifted nation :
For simulated Christians, confessed Druses :
And, for slaves past hope of the Mother-mount,
Freedmen returning there 'neath Venice' flag ;
That Venice which, the Hospitallers' foe,
Grants us from Candia escort home at price
Of our relinquished isle, Rhodes counts her own —
Venice, whose promised argosies should stand
Toward harbor : is it now that you, and you,
And you, selected from the rest to bear
The burthen of the Khalif's secret, further
To-day's event, entitled by your wrongs,
And witness in the Prefect's hall his fate —
That you dare clutch these gauds ? Ay, drop them !

*Karshook.* True,

Most true, all this ; and yet, may one dare hint,
Thou art the youngest of us ? — though employed
Abundantly as Djabal's confidant,
Transmitter of his mandates, even now.
Much less, whene'er beside him Anael graces
The cedar throne, his queen-bride, art thou like
To occupy its lowest step that day !
Now, Khalil, wert thou checked as thou aspirest,
Forbidden such or such an honor, — say,
Would silence serve so amply ?

*Khalil.* Karshook thinks

I covet honors ? Well, nor idly thinks.
Honors ? I have demanded of them all
The greatest.

*Karshook.* I supposed so.
*Khalil.* Judge, yourselves!
Turn, thus: 't is in the alcove at the back
Of yonder columned porch, whose entrance now
The veil hides, that our Prefect holds his state,
Receives the Nuncio, when the one, from Rhodes,
The other lands from Syria; there they meet.
Now, I have sued with earnest prayers . . .
*Karshook.* For what
Shall the Bride's brother vainly sue?
*Khalil.* That mine —
Avenging in one blow a myriad wrongs
— Might be the hand to slay the Prefect there!
Djabal reserves that office for himself. [*A silence.*
Thus far, as youngest of you all, I speak
— Scarce more enlightened than yourselves; since, near
As I approach him, nearer as I trust
Soon to approach our Master, he reveals
Only the God's power, not the glory yet.
Therefore I reasoned with you: now, as servant
To Djabal, bearing his authority,
Hear me appoint your several posts! Till noon
None see him save myself and Anael: once
The deed achieved, our Khalif, casting off
The embodied Awe's tremendous mystery,
The weakness of the flesh disguise, resumes
His proper glory, ne'er to fade again.

*Enter a* Druse.

*The Druse.* Our Prefect lands from Rhodes! — without a sign
That he suspects aught since he left our Isle;
Nor in his train a single guard beyond

The few he sailed with hence: so have we learned
From Loys.
*Karshook.* Loys? Is not Loys gone
Forever?
*Ayoob.* Loys, the Frank Knight, returned?
*The Druse.* Loys, the boy, stood on the leading prow
Conspicuous in his gay attire, and leapt
Into the surf the foremost. Since day-dawn
I kept watch to the Northward; take but note
Of my poor vigilance to Djabal!
*Khalil.* Peace!
Thou, Karshook, with thy company, receive
The Prefect as appointed: see, all keep
The wonted show of servitude: announce
His entry here by the accustomed peal
Of trumpets, then await the further pleasure
Of Djabal! (Loys back, whom Djabal sent
To Rhodes that we might spare the single Knight
Worth sparing!)

*Enter a second* Druse.

*The Druse.* I espied it first! Say, I
First spied the Nuncio's galley from the South!
Said'st thou a Crossed-keys' flag would flap the mast?
It nears apace! One galley and no more.
If Djabal chance to ask who spied the flag,
Forget not, I it was!
*Khalil.* Thou, Ayoob, bring
The Nuncio and his followers hither! Break
One rule prescribed, ye wither in your blood,
Die at your fault!

*Enter a third* Druse.

*The Druse.* I shall see home, see home !
— Shall banquet in the sombre groves again !
Hail to thee, Khalil ! Venice looms afar ;
The argosies of Venice, like a cloud,
Bear up from Candia in the distance !

*Khalil.* Joy !
Summon our people, Raghib ! Bid all forth !
Tell them the long-kept secret, old and young !
Set free the captive, let the trampled raise
Their faces from the dust, because at length
The cycle is complete, God Hakeem's reign
Begins anew ! Say, Venice for our guard,
Ere night we steer for Syria ! Hear you, Druses ?
Hear you this crowning witness to the claims
Of Djabal ? Oh, I spoke of hope and fear,
Reward and punishment, because he bade
Who has the right ; for me, what should I say
But, mar not those imperial lineaments,
No majesty of all that rapt regard
Vex by the least omission ! Let him rise
Without a check from you !

*Druses.* Let Djabal rise !

*Enter* Loys. — *The* Druses *are silent.*

*Loys.* Who speaks of Djabal ? — for I seek him, friends !

[*Aside.*] *Tu Dieu !* 'T is as our Isle broke out in song
For joy, its Prefect-incubus drops off
To-day, and I succeed him in his rule !
But no — they cannot dream of their good fortune !

[*Aloud.*] Peace to you, Druses ! I have tidings for you

But first for Djabal: where 's your tall bewitcher,
With that small Arab thin-lipped silver-mouth?
*Khalil* [*aside to* KARSHOOK]. Loys, in truth! Yet Djabal cannot err!
*Karshook* [*to* KHALIL]. And who takes charge of Loys? That 's forgotten,
Despite thy wariness! Will Loys stand
And see his comrades slaughtered?
*Loys* [*aside*]. How they shrink
And whisper, with those rapid faces! What?
The sight of me in their oppressors' garb
Strikes terror to the simple tribe? God's shame
On those that bring our Order ill repute!
But all 's at end now; better days begin
For these mild mountaineers from over-sea:
The timidest shall have in me no Prefect
To cower at thus! [*Aloud.*] I asked for Djabal —
*Karshook* [*aside*]. Better
One lured him, ere he can suspect, inside
The corridor; 't were easy to despatch
A youngster. [*To* LOYS.] Djabal passed some minutes since
Thro' yonder porch, and . . .
*Khalil* [*aside*]. Hold! What, him despatch?
The only Christian of them all we charge
No tyranny upon? Who, — noblest Knight
Of all that learned from time to time their trade
Of lust and cruelty among us, — heir
To Europe's pomp, a truest child of pride, —
Yet stood between the Prefect and ourselves
From the beginning? Loys, Djabal makes
Account of, and precisely sent to Rhodes
For safety? I take charge of him!
[*To* LOYS.] Sir Loys, —

*Loys.* There, cousins! Does Sir Loys strike you dead?

*Khalil* [*advancing*]. Djabal has intercourse with few or none
Till noontide: but, your pleasure?

*Loys.* "Intercourse
With few or none?"—(Ah, Khalil, when you spoke
I saw not your smooth face! All health!—and health
To Anael! How fares Anael?)—"Intercourse
With few or none?" Forget you, I've been friendly
With Djabal long ere you or any Druse?
—Enough of him at Rennes, I think, beneath
The Duke my father's roof! He 'd tell by the hour,
With fixed white eyes beneath his swarthy brow,
Plausiblest stories . . .

*Khalil.* Stories, say you?—Ah,
The quaint attire!

*Loys.* My dress for the last time!
How sad I cannot make you understand,
This ermine, o'er a shield, betokens me
Of Bretagne, ancientest of provinces
And noblest; and, what 's best and oldest there,
See, Dreux', our house's blazon, which the Nuncio
Tacks to an Hospitaller's vest to-day!

*Khalil.* The Nuncio we await? What brings you back
From Rhodes, Sir Loys?

*Loys.* How you island-tribe
Forget the world's awake while here you drowse!
What brings me back? What should not bring me, rather!
Our Patriarch's Nuncio visits you to-day—

Is not my year's probation out? I come
To take the knightly vows.
*Khalil.* What 's that you wear?
*Loys.* This Rhodian cross? The cross your Prefect wore.
You should have seen, as I saw, the full Chapter
Rise, to a man, while they transferred this cross
From that unworthy Prefect's neck to . . . (fool —
My secret will escape me!) In a word,
My year's probation passed, a Knight ere eve
Am I; bound, like the rest, to yield my wealth
To the common stock, to live in chastity,
(We Knights espouse alone our Order's fame)
— Change this gay weed for the back white-crossed gown,
And fight to death against the Infidel
— Not, therefore, against you, you Christians with
Such partial difference only as befits
The peacefullest of tribes. But, Khalil, prithee,
Is not the Isle brighter than wont to-day?
*Khalil.* Ah, the new sword!
*Loys.* See now! You handle sword
As 't were a camel-staff. Pull! That 's my motto,
Annealed "*Pro fide*," on the blade in blue.
*Khalil.* No curve in it? Surely a blade should curve.
*Loys.* Straight from the wrist! Loose — it should poise itself!
*Khalil* [*waving with irrepressible exultation the sword*]. We are a nation, Loys, of old fame
Among the mountains! Rights have we to keep
With the sword too!
[*Remembering himself.*] But I forget — you bid me
Seek Djabal?

*Loys.* What! A sword's sight scares you not?
(The People I will make of him and them!
Oh let my Prefect-sway begin at once!)
Bring Djabal — say, indeed, that come he must!
*Khalil.* At noon seek Djabal in the Prefect's Chamber,
And find . . . [*Aside.*] Nay, 't is thy cursed race's token,
Frank pride, no special insolence of thine!
[*Aloud.*] Tarry, and I will do your bidding, Loys!
[*To the rest aside.*] Now, forth you! I proceed to Djabal straight.
Leave this poor boy, who knows not what he says!
Oh will it not add joy to even thy joy,
Djabal, that I report all friends were true?
[KHALIL *goes, followed by the* Druses.
*Loys. Tu Dieu!* How happy I shall make these Druses!
Was 't not surpassingly contrived of me
To get the long list of their wrongs by heart,
Then take the first pretence for stealing off
From these poor islanders, present myself
Sudden at Rhodes before the noble Chapter,
And (as best proof of ardor in its cause
Which ere to-night will have become, too, mine)
Acquaint it with this plague-sore in its body,
This Prefect and his villanous career?
The princely Synod! All I dared request
Was his dismissal; and they graciously
Consigned his very office to myself —
Myself may cure the Isle diseased!
And well
For them, they did so! Since I never felt
How lone a lot, tho' brilliant, I embrace,

Till now that, past retrieval, it is mine.
To live thus, and thus die! Yet, as I leapt
On shore, so home a feeling greeted me
That I could half believe in Djabal's story,
He used to tempt my father with, at Rennes —
And me, too, since the story brought me here —
Of some Count Dreux and ancestor of ours
Who, sick of wandering from Bouillon's war,
Left his old name in Lebanon.
Long days
At least to spend in the Isle! and, my news known
An hour hence, what if Anael turn on me
The great black eyes I must forget?
Why, fool,
Recall them, then? My business is with Djabal,
Not Anael! Djabal tarries: if I seek him? —
The Isle is brighter than its wont to-day.

## ACT II.

*Enter* DJABAL.

*Djabal.* That a strong man should think himself a God!
I — Hakeem? To have wandered through the world,
Sown falsehood, and thence reaped now scorn, now faith,
For my one chant with many a change, my tale
Of outrage, and my prayer for vengeance — this
Required, forsooth, no mere man's faculty,
Naught less than Hakeem's? The persuading Loys
To pass probation here; the getting access
By Loys to the Prefect; worst of all,
The gaining my tribe's confidence by fraud
That would disgrace the very Frank, — a few

Of Europe's secrets which subdue the flame,
The wave, — to ply a simple tribe with these,
Took Hakeem?
And I feel this first to-day!
Does the day break, is the hour imminent
When one deed, when my whole life's deed, my deed
Must be accomplished? Hakeem? Why the God?
Shout, rather, "Djabal, Youssof's child, thought slain
With his whole race, the Druses' Sheikhs, this Prefect
Endeavored to extirpate — saved, a child,
Returns from traversing the world, a man,
Able to take revenge, lead back the march
To Lebanon" — so shout, and who gainsays?
But now, because delusion mixed itself
Insensibly with this career, all 's changed!
Have I brought Venice to afford us convoy?
"True — but my jugglings wrought that!" Put I heart
Into our people where no heart lurked? — "Ah,
What cannot an impostor do!"
Not this!
Not do this which I do! Not bid avaunt
Falsehood! Thou shalt not keep thy hold on me!
— Nor even get a hold on me! 'T is now —
This day — hour — minute — 't is as here I stand
On the accursed threshold of the Prefect,
That I am found deceiving and deceived!
And now what do I? — hasten to the few
Deceived, ere they deceive the many — shout,
"As I professed, I did believe myself!
Say, Druses, had you seen a butchery —
If Ayoob, Karshook saw —— Maani there
Must tell you how I saw my father sink;
My mother's arms twine still about my neck;
I hear my brother shriek, here 's yet the scar

Of what was meant for my own death-blow — say,
If you had woke like me, grown year by year
Out of the tumult in a far-off clime,
Would it be wondrous such delusion grew?
I walked the world, asked help at every hand;
Came help or no? Not this and this? Which helps
When I returned with, found the Prefect here,
The Druses here, all here but Hakeem's self,
The Khalif of the thousand prophecies,
Reserved for such a juncture, — could I call
My mission aught but Hakeem's? Promised Hakeem
More than performs the Djabal — you absolve?
— Me, you will never shame before the crowd
Yet happily ignorant? — Me, both throngs surround,
The few deceived, the many unabused,
— Who, thus surrounded, slay for you and them
The Prefect, lead to Lebanon? No Khalif,
But Sheikh once more! Mere Djabal — not" . . .

*Enter* KHALIL *hastily.*

*Khalil.* — God Hakeem!
'T is told! The whole Druse nation knows thee, Hakeem,
As we! and mothers lift on high their babes
Who seem aware, so glisten their great eyes,
Thou hast not failed us; ancient brows are proud;
Our elders could not earlier die, it seems,
Than at thy coming! The Druse heart is thine!
Take it! my lord and theirs, be thou adored!

*Djabal* [*aside*]. Adored! — but I renounce it utterly!

*Khalil.* Already are they instituting choirs
And dances to the Khalif, as of old
'T is chronicled thou bad'st them.

*Djabal* [*aside*]. I abjure it !
'T is not mine — not for me !
*Khalil.* Why pour they wine
Flavored like honey and bruised mountain-herbs,
Or wear those strings of sun-dried cedar-fruit ?
Oh, let me tell thee — Esaad, we supposed
Doting, is carried forth, eager to see
The last sun rise on the Isle : he can see now !
The shamed Druse women never wept before :
They can look up when we reach home, they say.
Smell ! — sweet cane, saved in Lilith's breast thus long —
Sweet ! — it grows wild in Lebanon. And I
Alone do nothing for thee ! 'T is my office
Just to announce what well thou know'st — but thus
Thou bidst me. At this self-same moment tend
The Prefect, Nuncio and the Admiral
Hither by their three sea-paths : nor forget
Who were the trusty watchers ! — thou forget ?
Like me, who do forget that Anael bade . . .
*Djabal* [*aside*]. Ay, Anael, Anael — is that said at last ?
Louder than all, that would be said, I knew !
What does abjuring mean, confessing mean,
To the people ? Till that woman crossed my path,
On went I, solely for my people's sake :
I saw her, and I then first saw myself,
And slackened pace : "if I should prove indeed
Hakeem — with Anael by ! "
*Khalil* [*aside*]. Ah, he is rapt !
Dare I at such a moment break on him
Even to do my sister's bidding ? Yes :
The eyes are Djabal's and not Hakeem's yet,
Though but till I have spoken this, perchance.

*Djabal* [*aside*]. To yearn to tell her, and yet have no one
Great heart's word that will tell her! I could gasp
Doubtless one such word out, and die.
[*Aloud.*] You said
That Anael . . .
*Khalil.* . . . Fain would see thee, speak with thee,
Before thou change, discard this Djabal's shape
She knows, for Hakeem's shape she is to know.
Something to say that will not from her mind!
I know not what — "Let him but come!" she said.
*Djabal* [*half-apart*]. My nation — all my Druses
— how fare they? 110
Those I must save, and suffer thus to save,
Hold they their posts? Wait they their Khalif too?
*Khalil.* All at the signal pant to flock around
That banner of a brow!
*Djabal* [*aside*]. And when they flock,
Confess them this: and after, for reward,
Be chased with howlings to her feet perchance!
— Have the poor outraged Druses, deaf and blind,
Precede me there, forestall my story there,
Tell it in mocks and jeers!
I lose myself.
Who needs a Hakeem to direct him now? 120
I need the veriest child — why not this child?
[*Turning abruptly to* KHALIL.
You are a Druse too, Khalil; you were nourished
Like Anael with our mysteries: if she
Could vow, so nourished, to love only one
Who should avenge the Druses, whence proceeds
Your silence? Wherefore made you no essay,
Who thus implicitly can execute
My bidding? What have I done, you could not?

Who, knowing more than Anael the prostration
Of our once lofty tribe, the daily life
Of this detested . . .
Does he come, you say,
This Prefect? All 's in readiness?
*Khalil.* The sword,
The sacred robe, the Khalif's mystic tiar,
Laid up so long, are all disposed beside
The Prefect's chamber.
*Djabal.* — Why did you despair?
*Khalil.* I know our nation's state? Too surely know,
As thou who speak'st to prove me! Wrongs like ours
Should wake revenge: but when I sought the wronged
And spoke, — "The Prefect stabbed your son — arise!
Your daughter, while you starve, eats shameless bread
In his pavilion — then arise!" — my speech
Fell idly: 't was, "Be silent, or worse fare!
Endure till time's slow cycle prove complete!
Who mayst thou be that takest on thee to thrust
Into this peril — art thou Hakeem?" No!
Only a mission like thy mission renders
All these obedient at a breath, subdues
Their private passions, brings their wills to one.
*Djabal.* You think so?
*Khalil.* Even now — when they have witnessed
Thy miracles — had I not threatened all
With Hakeem's vengeance, they would mar the work,
And couch ere this, each with his special prize,
Safe in his dwelling, leaving our main hope
To perish. No! When these have kissed thy feet
At Lebanon, the past purged off, the present
Clear, — for the future, even Hakeem's mission
May end, and I perchance, or any youth,
Shall rule them thus renewed. — I tutor thee!

*Djabal.* And wisely. (He is Anael's brother, pure
As Anael's self.) Go say, I come to her.
Haste! I will follow you. [KHALIL *goes.*
Oh, not confess
To these, the blinded multitude — confess,
Before at least the fortune of my deed
Half-authorize its means! Only to her
Let me confess my fault, who in my path
Curled up like incense from a Mage-king's tomb
When he would have the wayfarer descend
Through the earth's rift and bear hid treasure forth!
How should child's-carelessness prove manhood's crime
Till now that I, whose lone youth hurried past,
Letting each joy 'scape for the Druses' sake,
At length recover in one Druse all joy?
Were her brow brighter, her eyes richer, still
Would I confess. On the gulf's verge I pause.
How could I slay the Prefect, thus and thus?
Anael, be mine to guard me, not destroy! [*Goes.*

*Enter* ANAEL, *and* MAANI *who is assisting to array her in the ancient dress of the Druses.*

*Anael.* Those saffron vestures of the tabret-girls!
Comes Djabal, think you?
*Maani.* Doubtless Djabal comes.
*Anael.* Dost thou snow-swathe thee kinglier, Lebanon,
Than in my dreams? — Nay, all the tresses off
My forehead! Look I lovely so? He says
That I am lovely.
*Maani.* Lovely: nay, that hangs
Awry.
*Anael.* You tell me how a khandjar hangs?
The sharp side, thus, along the heart, see, marks

The maiden of our class. Are you content
For Djabal as for me?
*Maani.* Content, my child.
*Anael.* Oh mother, tell me more of him! He comes
Even now — tell more, fill up my soul with him!
*Maani.* And did I not . . . yes, surely . . . tell you all?
*Anael.* What will be changed in Djabal when the Change
Arrives? Which feature? Not his eyes!
*Maani.* 'T is writ
Our Hakeem's eyes rolled fire and clove the dark
Superbly.
*Anael.* Not his eyes! His voice perhaps?
Yet that 's no change; for a grave current lived
— Grandly beneath the surface ever lived,
That, scattering, broke as in live silver spray
While . . . ah, the bliss . . . he would discourse to me
In that enforced still fashion, word on word!
'T is the old current which must swell thro' that,
For what least tone, Maani, could I lose?
'T is surely not his voice will change!
— If Hakeem
Only stood by! If Djabal, somehow, passed
Out of the radiance as from out a robe;
Possessed, but was not it!
He lived with you?
Well — and that morning Djabal saw me first
And heard me vow never to wed but one
Who saved my People — on that day . . . proceed!
*Maani.* Once more, then: from the time of his return

In secret, changed so since he left the Isle
That I, who screened our Emir's last of sons,
This Djabal, from the Prefect's massacre
— Who bade him ne'er forget the child he was,
— Who dreamed so long the youth he might become —
I knew not in the man that child; the man
Who spoke alone of hope to save our tribe,
How he had gone from land to land to save
Our tribe — allies were sure, nor foes to dread.
And much he mused, days, nights, alone he mused:
But never till that day when, pale and worn
As by a persevering woe, he cried
"Is there not one Druse left me?" — and I showed
The way to Khalil's and your hiding-place
From the abhorred eye of the Prefect here,
So that he saw you, heard you speak — till then,
Never did he announce — (how the moon seemed
To ope and shut, the while, above us both!)
— His mission was the mission promised us;
The cycle had revolved; all things renewing,
He was lost Hakeem clothed in flesh to lead
His children home anon, now veiled to work
Great purposes: the Druses now would change!
*Anael.* And they have changed! And obstacles did sink,
And furtherances rose! And round his form
Played fire, and music beat her angel wings!
My people, let me more rejoice, oh more
For you than for myself! Did I but watch
Afar the pageant, feel our Khalif pass,
One of the throng, how proud were I — tho' ne'er
Singled by Djabal's glance! But to be chosen
His own from all, the most his own of all,
To be exalted with him, side by side,

Lead the exulting Druses, meet . . . ah, how
Worthily meet the maidens who await
Ever beneath the cedars — how deserve
This honor, in their eyes? So bright are they
Who saffron-vested sound the tabret there,
The girls who throng there in my dream! One hour
And all is over: how shall I do aught
That may deserve next hour's exalting? — How? —
[*Suddenly to* MAANI.
Mother, I am not worthy him! I read it
Still in his eyes! He stands as if to tell me
I am not, yet forbears. Why else revert
To one theme ever? — how mere human gifts
Suffice him in myself — whose worship fades,
Whose awe goes ever off at his approach,
As now, who when he comes . . .
[DJABAL *enters.*] Oh why is it
I cannot kneel to you?
*Djabal.* Rather, 't is I
Should kneel to you, my Anael!
*Anael.* Even so!
For never seem you — shall I speak the truth? —
Never a God to me! 'T is the Man's hand,
Eye, voice! Oh do you veil these to our people,
Or but to me? To them, I think, to them!
And brightness is their veil, shadow — my truth!
You mean that I should never kneel to you
— So, thus I kneel!
*Djabal* [*preventing her*]. No — no!
[*Feeling the khandjar as he raises her.*
Ha, have you chosen . . .
*Anael.* The khandjar with our ancient garb. But, Djabal,
Change not, be not exalted yet! Give time

That I may plan more, perfect more! My blood
Beats, beats!
[*Aside.*] Oh must I then — since Loys leaves us
Never to come again, renew in me
These doubts so near effaced already — must
I needs confess them now to Djabal? — own
That when I saw that stranger, heard his voice,
My faith fell, and the woful thought flashed first
That each effect of Djabal's presence, taken
For proof of more than human attributes
In him, by me whose heart at his approach
Beat fast, whose brain while he was by swam round,
Whose soul at his departure died away,
— That every such effect might have been wrought
In other frames, tho' not in mine, by Loys
Or any merely mortal presence? Doubt
Is fading fast; shall I reveal it now?
How shall I meet the rapture presently,
With doubt unexpiated, undisclosed?
*Djabal* [*aside*]. Avow the truth? I cannot! In what words
Avow that all she loved in me was false?
— Which yet has served that flower-like love of hers
To climb by, like the clinging gourd, and clasp
With its divinest wealth of leaf and bloom.
Could I take down the prop-work, in itself
So vile, yet interlaced and overlaid
With painted cups and fruitage — might these still
Bask in the sun, unconscious their own strength
Of matted stalk and tendril had replaced
The old support thus silently withdrawn!
But no; the beauteous fabric crushes too.
'T is not for my sake but for Anael's sake

I leave her soul this Hakeem where it leans.
Oh could I vanish from her, quit the Isle!
And yet — a thought comes: here my work is done
At every point; the Druses must return —
Have convoy to their birth-place back, whoe'er
The leader be, myself or any Druse —
Venice is pledged to that: 't is for myself,
For my own vengeance in the Prefect's death,
I stay now, not for them: to slay or spare
The Prefect, whom imports it save myself?
He cannot bar their passage from the Isle;
What would his death be but my own reward?
Then, mine I will forego. It is foregone!
Let him escape with all my House's blood!
Ere he can reach land, Djabal disappears,
And Hakeem, Anael loved, shall, fresh as first,
Live in her memory, keeping her sublime
Above the world. She cannot touch that world
By ever knowing what I truly am,
Since Loys, — of mankind the only one
Able to link my present with my past,
My life in Europe with my Island life,
Thence, able to unmask me, — I 've disposed
Safely at last at Rhodes, and . . .

*Enter* KHALIL.

*Khalil.* Loys greets thee!

*Djabal.* Loys? To drag me back? It cannot be!

*Anael* [*aside*]. Loys! Ah, doubt may not be stifled so!

*Khalil.* Can I have erred that thou so gazest? Yes, I told thee not in the glad press of tidings
Of higher import, Loys is returned

Before the Prefect, with, if possible,
Twice the light-heartedness of old. As though
On some inauguration he expects,
To-day, the world's fate hung!
*Djabal.* — And asks for me?
*Khalil.* Thou knowest all things. Thee in chief he greets,
But every Druse of us is to be happy
At his arrival, he declares: were Loys
Thou, Master, he could have no wider soul
To take us in with. How I love that Loys!
*Djabal* [*aside*]. Shame winds me with her tether round and round.
*Anael* [*aside*]. Loys? I take the trial! it is meet,
The little I can do, be done; that faith,
All I can offer, want no perfecting
Which my own act may compass. Ay, this way
All may go well, nor that ignoble doubt
Be chased by other aid than mine. Advance
Close to my fear, weigh Loys with my Lord,
The mortal with the more than mortal gifts!
*Djabal* [*aside*]. Before, there were so few deceived! and now
There 's doubtless not one least Druse in the Isle
But, having learned my superhuman claims,
And calling me his Khalif-God, will clash
The whole truth out from Loys at first word!
While Loys, for his part, will hold me up,
With a Frank's unimaginable scorn
Of such imposture, to my people's eyes!
Could I but keep him longer yet awhile
From them, amuse him here until I plan
How he and I at once may leave the Isle!
Khalil I cannot part with from my side —

My only help in this emergency :
There 's Anael !
*Anael.* Please you ?
*Djabal.* Anael — none but she !
[*To* ANAEL.] I pass some minutes in the chamber there,
Ere I see Loys : you shall speak with him
Until I join you. Khalil follows me.
*Anael* [*aside*]. As I divined : he bids me save myself,
Offers me a probation — I accept.
Let me see Loys !
*Loys* [*without*]. Djabal !
*Anael* [*aside*]. 'T is his voice.
The smooth Frank trifler with our people's wrongs,
The self-complacent boy-inquirer, loud
On this and that inflicted tyranny,
— Aught serving to parade an ignorance
Of how wrong feels, inflicted ! Let me close
With what I viewed at distance : let myself
Probe this delusion to the core !
*Djabal.* He comes.
Khalil, along with me ! while Anael waits
Till I return once more — and but once more.

## ACT III.

ANAEL *and* LOYS.

*Anael.* Here leave me ! Here I wait another.
'T was
For no mad protestation of a love
Like this you say possesses you, I came.
*Loys.* Love ? how protest a love I dare not feel ?

Mad words may doubtless have escaped me: you
Are here — I only feel you here!
*Anael.* No more!
*Loys.* But once again, whom could you love? I dare,
Alas, say nothing of myself, who am
A Knight now, for when Knighthood we embrace,
Love we abjure: so, speak on safely: speak,
Lest I speak, and betray my faith! And yet
To say your breathing passes through me, changes
My blood to spirit, and my spirit to you,
As Heaven the sacrificer's wine to it —
This is not to protest my love! You said
You could love one . . .
*Anael.* One only! We are bent
To earth — who raises up my tribe, I love;
The Prefect bows us — who removes him; we
Have ancient rights — who gives them back to us,
I love. Forbear me! Let my hand go!
*Loys.* Him
You could love only? Where is Djabal? Stay!
[*Aside.*] Yet wherefore stay? Who does this but myself?
Had I apprised her that I come to do
Just this, what more could she acknowledge? No,
She sees into my heart's core! What is it
Feeds either cheek with red, as June some rose?
Why turns she from me? Ah fool, over-fond
To dream I could call up . . .
. . . What never dream
Yet feigned! 'T is love! Oh Anael, speak to me!
Djabal —
*Anael.* Seek Djabal by the Prefect's chamber
At noon! [*She paces the room.*

*Loys* [*aside*]. And am I not the Prefect now?
Is it my fate to be the only one
Able to win her love, the only one
Unable to accept her love? The past
Breaks up beneath my footing: came I here
This morn as to a slave, to set her free
And take her thanks, and then spend day by day
Content beside her in the Isle? What works
This knowledge in me now? Her eye has broken
The faint disguise away: for Anael's sake
I left the Isle, for her espoused the cause
Of the Druses, all for her I thought, till now,
To live without!
— As I must live! To-day
Ordains me Knight, forbids me . . . never shall
Forbid me to profess myself, heart, arm,
Thy soldier!
*Anael.* Djabal you demanded, comes.
*Loys* [*aside*]. What wouldst thou, Loys? See him?
Naught beside
Is wanting: I have felt his voice a spell
From first to last. He brought me here, made known
The Druses to me, drove me hence to seek
Redress for them; and shall I meet him now,
When naught is wanting but a word of his,
To — what? — induce me to spurn hope, faith, pride,
Honor away, — to cast my lot among
His tribe, become a proverb in men's mouths,
Breaking my high pact of companionship
With those who graciously bestowed on me
The very opportunities I turn
Against them! Let me not see Djabal now!

*Anaël.* The Prefect also comes.
*Loys* [*aside*]. Him let me see,
Not Djabal! Him, degraded at a word,
To soothe me, — to attest belief in me —
And after, Djabal! Yes, ere I return
To her, the Nuncio's vow shall have destroyed
This heart's rebellion, and coerced this will
Forever.
Anael, not before the vows
Irrevocably fix me . . .
Let me fly!
The Prefect, or I lose myself forever! [*Goes.*
*Anael.* Yes, I am calm now; just one way remains —
One, to attest my faith in him: for, see,
I were quite lost else: Loys, Djabal, stand
On either side — two men! I balance looks
And words, give Djabal a man's preference,
No more. In Djabal, Hakeem is absorbed!
And for a love like this, the God who saves
My race, selects me for his bride? One way!

*Enter* DJABAL.

*Djabal* [*to himself*]. No moment is to waste then; 't is resolved.
If Khalil may be trusted to lead back
My Druses, and if Loys can be lured
Out of the Isle — if I procure his silence,
Or promise never to return at least, —
All 's over. Even now my bark awaits:
I reach the next wild islet and the next,
And lose myself beneath the sun forever.
And now, to Anael!

*Anael.* Djabal, I am thine !

*Djabal.* Mine ? Djabal's ? — As if Hakeem had not been ?

*Anael.* Not Djabal's ? Say first, do you read my thought ?

Why need I speak, if you can read my thought ?

*Djabal.* I do not, I have said a thousand times.

*Anael.* (My secret's safe, I shall surprise him yet !)

Djabal, I knew your secret from the first :
Djabal, when first I saw you . . . (by our porch
You leant, and pressed the tinkling veil away,
And one fringe fell behind your neck — I see !)
. . . I knew you were not human, for I said
" This dim secluded house where the sea beats
Is heaven to me — my people's huts are hell
To them ; this august form will follow me,
Mix with the waves his voice will, — I have him ;
And they, the Prefect ! Oh, my happiness
Rounds to the full whether I choose or no !
His eyes met mine, he was about to speak,
His hand grew damp — surely he meant to say
He let me love him : in that moment's bliss
I shall forget my people pine for home —
They pass and they repass with pallid eyes ! "
I vowed at once a certain vow ; this vow —
Not to embrace you till my tribe was saved.
Embrace me !

*Djabal* [*apart*]. And she loved me ! Naught remained
But that ! Nay, Anael, is the Prefect dead ?

*Anael.* Ah, you reproach me ! True, his death crowns all,
I know — or should know : and I would do much,

Believe! but, death! Oh, you, who have known
death,
Would never doom the Prefect, were death fearful
As we report!
Death! — a fire curls within us
From the foot's palm, and fills up to the brain,
Up, out, then shatters the whole bubble-shell
Of flesh, perchance!
Death! — witness, I would die,
Whate'er death be, would venture now to die
For Khalil, for Maani — what for thee?
Nay, but embrace me, Djabal, in assurance
My vow will not be broken, for I must
Do something to attest my faith in you,
Be worthy you!

*Djabal* [*avoiding her*]. I come for that — to say
Such an occasion is at hand: 't is like
I leave you — that we part, my Anael, — part
Forever!

*Anael.* We part? Just so! I have succumbed, —
I am, he thinks, unworthy — and naught less
Will serve than such approval of my faith.
Then, we part not! Remains there no way short
Of that? Oh not that!
Death! — yet a hurt bird
Died in my hands; its eyes filmed — "Nay, it
sleeps,"
I said, "'t will wake to-morrow well:" 't was
dead.

*Djabal.* I stand here and time fleets. Anael —
I come
To bid a last farewell to you: perhaps
We never meet again. But, ere the Prefect
Arrive . . .

*Enter* KHALIL, *breathlessly.*

*Khalil.* He 's here! The Prefect! Twenty guards,
No more: no sign he dreams of danger. All
Awaits thee only. Ayoob, Karshook, keep
Their posts — wait but the deed's accomplishment
To join us with thy Druses to a man.
Still holds his course the Nuncio — near and near
The fleet from Candia steering.
*Djabal* [*aside*]. All is lost!
— Or won?
*Khalil.* And I have laid the sacred robe,
The sword, the head-tiar, at the porch — the place
Commanded. Thou wilt hear the Prefect's trumpet.
*Djabal.* Then I keep Anael, — him then, past recall,
I slay — 't is forced on me. As I began
I must conclude — so be it!
*Khalil.* For the rest,
Save Loys, our foe's solitary sword,
All is so safe that . . . I will ne'er entreat
Thy post again of thee: tho' danger none,
There must be glory only meet for thee
In slaying the Prefect.
*Anael* [*aside*]. And 't is now that Djabal
Would leave me! — in the glory meet for him!
*Djabal.* As glory, I would yield the deed to you
Or any Druse; what peril there may be,
I keep. [*Aside.*] All things conspire to hound me on.
Not now, my soul, draw back, at least! Not now!
The course is plain, howe'er obscure all else.
Once offer this tremendous sacrifice,
Prevent what else will be irreparable,

Secure these transcendental helps, regain
The Cedars — then let all dark clear itself!
I slay him!
*Khalil.* Anael, and no part for us!
[*To* DJABAL.] Hast thou possessed her with . . .
*Djabal* [*to* ANAEL]. Whom speak you to?
What is it you behold there? Nay, this smile
Turns stranger. Shudder you? The man must die,
As thousands of our race have died thro' him.
One blow, and I discharge his weary soul
From the flesh that pollutes it! Let him fill
Straight some new expiatory form, of earth
Or sea, the reptile or some aëry thing:
What is there in his death?
*Anael.* My brother said,
Is there no part in it for us?
*Djabal.* For Khalil, —
The trumpet will announce the Nuncio's entry;
Here, I shall find the Prefect hastening
In the Pavilion to receive him — here
I slay the Prefect; meanwhile Ayoob leads
The Nuncio with his guards within: once these
Secured in the outer hall, bid Ayoob bar
Entry or egress till I give the sign
Which waits the landing of the argosies
You will announce to me: this double sign
That justice is performed and help arrived,
When Ayoob shall receive, but not before,
Let him throw ope the palace doors, admit
The Druses to behold their tyrant, ere
We leave forever this detested spot.
Go, Khalil, hurry all! No pause, no pause!
Whirl on the dream, secure to wake anon!
*Khalil.* What sign? and who the bearer?

*Djabal.* Who shall show
My ring, admit to Ayoob. How she stands!
Have I not . . . I must have some task for her.
Anael, not that way! 'T is the Prefect's chamber!
Anael, keep you the ring — give you the sign!
(It holds her safe amid the stir.) You will
Be faithful?

*Anael* [*taking the ring*]. I would fain be worthy.
Hark! [*Trumpet without.*

*Khalil.* He comes.

*Djabal.* And I too come.

*Anael.* One word, but one!
Say, shall you be exalted at the deed? 200
Then? On the instant?

*Djabal.* I exalted? What?
He, there — we, thus — our wrongs revenged, our tribe
Set free? Oh, then shall I, assure yourself,
Shall you, shall each of us, be in his death
Exalted!

*Khalil.* He is here.

*Djabal.* Away — away! [*They go.*

*Enter the* PREFECT *with* Guards, *and* LOYS.

*The Prefect* [*to* Guards]. Back, I say, to the galley every guard!
That 's my sole care now; see each bench retains
Its complement of rowers; I embark
O' the instant, since this Knight will have it so.
Alas me! Could you have the heart, my Loys! 210
[*To a* Guard *who whispers.*] Oh, bring the holy Nuncio here forthwith! [*The* Guards *go.*
Loys, a rueful sight, confess, to see
The gray discarded Prefect leave his post,

With tears i' the eye! So, you are Prefect now?
You depose me — you succeed me? Ha, ha!
*Loys.* And dare you laugh, whom laughter less becomes
Than yesterday's forced meekness we beheld . . .
*Prefect.* — When you so eloquently pleaded, Loys,
For my dismissal from the post? Ah, meek
With cause enough, consult the Nuncio else!
And wish him the like meekness: for so stanch
A servant of the Church can scarce have bought
His share in the Isle, and paid for it, hard pieces!
You've my successor to condole with, Nuncio!
I shall be safe by then i' the galley, Loys!
*Loys.* You make as you would tell me you rejoice
To leave your scene of . . .
*Prefect.* Trade in the dear Druses?
Blood and sweat traffic? Spare what yesterday
We heard enough of! Drove I in the Isle
A profitable game? Learn wit, my son,
Which you 'll need shortly! Did it never breed
Suspicion in you, all was not pure profit,
When I, the insatiate . . . and so forth — was bent
On having a partaker in my rule?
Why did I yield this Nuncio half the gain,
If not that I might also shift — what on him?
Half of the peril, Loys!
*Loys.* Peril?
*Prefect.* Hark you!
I 'd love you if you 'd let me — this for reason,
You save my life at price of . . . well, say risk
At least, of yours. I came a long time since
To the Isle; our Hospitallers bade me tame
These savage wizards, and reward myself —

*Loys.* The Knights who so repudiate your crime?
*Prefect.* Loys, the Knights! we doubtless understood
Each other; as for trusting to reward
From any friend beside myself . . . no, no!
I clutched mine on the spot, when it was sweet,
And I had taste for it. I felt these wizards
Alive — was sure they were not on me, only
When I was on them: but with age comes caution:
And stinging pleasures please less and sting more.
Year by year, fear by fear! The girls were brighter
Than ever ('faith, there 's yet one Anael left,
I set my heart upon — Oh, prithee, let
That brave new sword lie still!) — These joys looked brighter,
But silenter the town, too, as I passed.
With this alcove's delicious memories
Began to mingle visions of gaunt fathers,
Quick-eyed sons, fugitives from the mine, the oar,
Stealing to catch me. Brief, when I began
To quake with fear — (I think I hear the Chapter
Solicited to let me leave, now all
Worth staying for was gained and gone!) — I say,
Just when, for the remainder of my life,
All methods of escape seemed lost — that then
Up should a young hot-headed Loys spring,
Talk very long and loud, — in fine, compel
The Knights to break their whole arrangement, have me
Home for pure shame — from this safehold of mine
Where but ten thousand Druses seek my life,
To my wild place of banishment, San Gines
By Murcia, where my three fat manors lying,
Purchased by gains here and the Nuncio's gold,
Are all I have to guard me, — that such fortune

Should fall to me, I hardly could expect.
Therefore I say, I 'd love you.
*Loys.* Can it be?
I play into your hands then? Oh no, no!
The Venerable Chapter, the Great Order
Sunk o' the sudden into fiends of the pit?
But I will back — will yet unveil you!
*Prefect.* Me? 280
To whom? — perhaps Sir Galeas, who in Chapter
Shook his white head thrice — and some dozen times
My hand next morning shook, for value paid!
To that Italian saint, Sir Cosimo? —
Indignant at my wringing year by year
A thousand bezants from the coral-divers,
As you recounted; felt the saint aggrieved?
Well might he — I allowed for his half-share
Merely one hundred. To Sir . . .
*Loys.* See! you dare
Inculpate the whole Order; yet should I, 290
A youth, a sole voice, have the power to change
Their evil way, had they been firm in it?
Answer me!
*Prefect.* Oh, the son of Bretagne's Duke,
And that son's wealth, the father's influence, too,
And the young arm, we 'll even say, my Loys,
— The fear of losing or diverting these
Into another channel, by gainsaying
A novice too abruptly, could not influence
The Order! You might join, for aught they cared,
Their red-cross rivals of the Temple! Well, 300
I thank you for my part, at all events.
Stay here till they withdraw you! You 'll inhabit
My palace — sleep, perchance, in the alcove
Whither I go to meet our holy friend.

Good! and now disbelieve me if you can, —
This is the first time for long years I enter
Thus [*lifts the arras*] without feeling just as if I lifted
The lid up of my tomb.
*Loys.* They share his crime!
God's punishment will overtake you yet.
*Prefect.* Thank you it does not! Pardon this last flash:
I bear a sober visage presently
With the disinterested Nuncio here —
His purchase-money safe at Murcia, too!
Let me repeat — for the first time, no draught
Coming as from a sepulchre salutes me.
When we next meet, this folly may have passed,
We 'll hope. Ha, ha! [*Goes through the arras.*
*Loys.* Assure me but . . . he 's gone!
He could not lie. Then what have I escaped,
I, who had so nigh given up happiness
Forever, to be linked with him and them!
Oh, opportunest of discoveries! I
Their Knight? I utterly renounce them all!
Hark! What, he meets by this the Nuncio? Yes,
The same hyæna groan-like laughter! Quick —
To Djabal! I am one of them at last,
These simple-hearted Druses — Anael's tribe!
Djabal! She 's mine at last. Djabal, I say! [*Goes.*

## ACT IV.

*Enter* DJABAL.

*Djabal.* Let me but slay the Prefect. The end now!
To-morrow will be time enough to pry
Into the means I took: suffice, they served,
Ignoble as they were, to hurl revenge
True to its object. [*Seeing the robe, etc., disposed.*
Mine should never so
Have hurried to accomplishment! Thee, Djabal,
Far other mood befitted! Calm the Robe
Should clothe this doom's awarder!
[*Taking the robe.*] Shall I dare
Assume my nation's Robe? I am at least
A Druse again, chill Europe's policy
Drops from me: I dare take the Robe. Why not
The Tiar? I rule the Druses, and what more
Betokens it than rule? — yet — yet —
[*Lays down the tiar.*
[*Footsteps in the alcove.*] He comes!
[*Taking the sword.*
If the Sword serve, let the Tiar lie! So, feet
Clogged with the blood of twenty years can fall
Thus lightly! Round me, all ye ghosts! He 'll lift . . .
Which arm to push the arras wide? — or both?
Stab from the neck down to the heart — there stay!
Near he comes — nearer — the next footstep! Now!
[*As he dashes aside the arras,* ANAEL *is discovered.*
Ha! Anael! Nay, my Anael, can it be?
Heard you the trumpet? I must slay him here,

And here you ruin all. Why speak you not?
Anael, the Prefect comes! [ANAEL *screams.*
So slow to feel
'T is not a sight for you to look upon?
A moment's work — but such work! Till you go,
I must be idle — idle, I risk all!
[*Pointing to her hair.*
Those locks are well, and you are beauteous thus,
But with the dagger 't is, I have to do!
*Anael.* With mine!
*Djabal.* Blood — Anael?
*Anael.* Djabal, 't is thy deed!
It must be! I had hoped to claim it mine —
Be worthy thee — but I must needs confess
'T was not I, but thyself . . . not I have . . .
Djabal!
Speak to me!
*Djabal.* Oh, my punishment!
*Anael.* Speak to me
While I can speak! touch me, despite the blood!
When the command passed from thy soul to mine,
I went, fire leading me, muttering of thee,
And the approaching exaltation, — "make
One sacrifice!" I said, — and he sat there,
Bade me approach; and, as I did approach,
Thy fire with music burst into my brain.
'T was but a moment's work, thou saidst — perchance
It may have been so! Well, it is thy deed.
*Djabal.* It is my deed.
*Anael.* His blood all this! — this! and . . .
And more! Sustain me, Djabal! Wait not — now
Let flash thy glory! Change thyself and me!
It must be! Ere the Druses flock to us!
At least confirm me! Djabal, blood gushed forth —

He was our tyrant — but I looked he 'd fall
Prone as asleep — why else is death called sleep?
Sleep? He bent o'er his breast! 'T is sin, I
know, —
Punish me, Djabal, but wilt thou let him?
Be it thou that punishest, not he — who creeps
On his red breast — is here! 'T is the small groan
Of a child — no worse! Bestow the new life, then!
Too swift it cannot be, too strange, surpassing!
[*Following him as he retreats.*
Now! Change us both! Change me and change
thou!
*Djabal* [*sinks on his knees*]. Thus!
Behold my change! You have done nobly. I! —
*Anael.* Can Hakeem kneel?
*Djabal.* No Hakeem, and scarce Djabal!
I have dealt falsely, and this woe is come.
No — hear me ere scorn blast me! Once and ever,
The deed is mine. Oh think upon the past!
*Anael* [*to herself*]. Did I strike once, or twice, or
many times?
*Djabal.* I came to lead my tribe where, bathed in
glooms,
Doth Bahumid the Renovator sleep:
Anael, I saw my tribe: I said, "Without
A miracle this cannot be" — I said
"Be there a miracle!" — for I saw you.
*Anael.* His head lies south the portal.
*Djabal.* — Weighed with this
The general good, how could I choose my own?
What matter was my purity of soul?
Little by little I engaged myself —
Heaven would accept me for its instrument,
I hoped: I said Heaven had accepted me.

*Anael.* Is it this blood breeds dreams in me? Who said
You were not Hakeem? And your miracles —
The fire that plays innocuous round your form?
[*Again changing her whole manner.*
Ah, thou wouldst try me — thou art Hakeem still!
*Djabal.* Woe — woe! As if the Druses of the Mount
(Scarce Arabs, even there, but here, in the Isle,
Beneath their former selves) should comprehend
The subtle lore of Europe! A few secrets
That would not easily affect the meanest
Of the crowd there, could wholly subjugate
The best of our poor tribe. Again that eye?
*Anael* [*after a pause springs to his neck*]. Djabal, in this there can be no deceit!
Why, Djabal, were you human only, — think,
Maani is but human, Khalil human,
Loys is human even — did their words
Haunt me, their looks pursue me? Shame on you
So to have tried me! Rather, shame on me
So to need trying! Could I, with the Prefect
And the blood, there — could I see only you?
— Hang by your neck over this gulf of blood?
Speak, I am saved! Speak, Djabal! Am I saved?
[*As* DJABAL *slowly unclasps her arms, and puts her silently from him.*
Hakeem would save me. Thou art Djabal. Crouch!
Bow to the dust, thou basest of our kind!
The pile of thee, I reared up to the cloud —
Full, midway, of our fathers' trophied tombs,
Based on the living rock, devoured not by
The unstable desert's jaws of sand, — falls prone.
Fire, music, quenched: and now thou liest there

A ruin, obscene creatures will moan through.
— Let us come, Djabal !
*Djabal.* Whither come ?
*Anael.* At once —
Lest so it grow intolerable. Come !
Will I not share it with thee ? Best at once !
So, feel less pain ! Let them deride, — thy tribe
Now trusting in thee, — Loys shall deride !
Come to them, hand in hand, with me !
*Djabal.* Where come ?
*Anael.* Where ? — to the Druses thou hast wronged !
Confess,
Now that the end is gained — (I love thee now —)
That thou hast so deceived them — (perchance love thee
Better than ever.) Come, receive their doom
Of infamy ! O, best of all I love thee !
Shame with the man, no triumph with the God,
Be mine ! Come !
*Djabal.* Never ! More shame yet ? and why ?
Why ? You have called this deed mine — it is mine !
And with it I accept its circumstance.
How can I longer strive with fate ? The past
Is past : my false life shall henceforth show true.
Hear me ! The argosies touch land by this ;
They bear us to fresh scenes and happier skies.
What if we reign together ? — if we keep
Our secret for the Druses' good ? — by means
Of even their superstition, plant in them
New life ? I learn from Europe : all who seek
Man's good must awe man, by such means as these.
We two will be divine to them — we are !
All great works in this world spring from the ruins
Of greater projects — ever, on our earth,

Babels men block out, Babylons they build.
I wrest the weapon from your hand! I claim
The deed! Retire! You have my ring — you bar
All access to the Nuncio till the forces
From Venice land.

*Anael.* Thou wilt feign Hakeem then?

*Djabal* [*putting the Tiara of Hakeem on his head*].
And from this moment that I dare ope wide
Eyes that till now refused to see, begins
My true dominion: for I know myself,
And what am I to personate. No word?

[ANAEL *goes.*

'T is come on me at last! His blood on her ——
What memories will follow that! Her eye,
Her fierce distorted lip and ploughed black brow!
Ah, fool! Has Europe then so poorly tamed
The Syrian blood from out thee? Thou, presume
To work in this foul earth by means not foul?
Scheme, as for heaven, — but, on the earth, be glad
If a least ray like heaven's be left thee!
Thus
I shall be calm — in readiness — no way
Surprised. [*A noise without.*
This should be Khalil and my Druses.
Venice is come then! Thus I grasp thee, sword!
Druses, 't is Hakeem saves you! In! Behold
Your Prefect!

*Enter* LOYS. DJABAL *hides the khandjar in his robe.*

*Loys.* Oh, well found, Djabal! — but no time for words.
You know who waits there? [*Pointing to the alcove.*
Well! — and that 't is there

He meets the Nuncio? Well? Now, a surprise —
He there —
*Djabal.* I know —
*Loys.* —— is now no mortal's lord,
Is absolutely powerless — call him, dead —
He is no longer Prefect — you are Prefect!
Oh, shrink not! I do nothing in the dark,
Nothing unworthy Breton blood, believe!
I understood at once your urgency
That I should leave this isle for Rhodes; I felt
What you were loth to speak — your need of help.
I have fulfilled the task that earnestness
Imposed on me: have, face to face, confronted
The Prefect in full Chapter, charged on him
The enormities of his long rule; he stood
Mute, offered no defence, no crime denied.
On which, I spoke of you, and of your tribe,
Your faith so like our own, and all you urged
Of old to me: I spoke, too, of your goodness,
Your patience — brief, I hold henceforth the Isle
In charge, am nominally lord, — but you,
You are associated in my rule —
Are the true Prefect! Ay, such faith had they
In my assurance of your loyalty
(For who insults an imbecile old man?)
That we assume the Prefecture this hour.
You gaze at me? Hear greater wonders yet —
I cast down all the fabric I have built.
These Knights, I was prepared to worship . . . but
Of that another time; what 's now to say,
Is — I shall never be a Knight! Oh, Djabal,
Here first I throw all prejudice aside,
And call you brother! I am Druse like you:
My wealth, my friends, my power, are wholly yours,

Your people's, which is now my people: for
There is a maiden of your tribe, I love —
She loves me — Khalil's sister ——
*Djabal.* Anael?
*Loys.* Start you?
Seems what I say, unknightly? Thus it chanced:
When first I came, a novice, to the isle . . . 190

*Enter one of the* Nuncio's Guards *from the alcove.*

*Guard.* Oh horrible! Sir Loys! Here is Loys!
And here — [*Others enter from the alcove.*
[*Pointing to* Djabal.] Secure him, bind him — this
is he! [*They surround* Djabal.
*Loys.* Madmen — what is 't you do? Stand from
my friend,
And tell me!
*Guard.* Thou canst have no part in this —
Surely no part! But slay him not! The Nuncio
Commanded, slay him not!
*Loys.* Speak, or . . .
*Guard.* The Prefect
Lies murdered there by him thou dost embrace.
*Loys.* By Djabal? Miserable fools! How Djabal?
[*A* Guard *lifts* Djabal's *robe;* Djabal *flings down the khandjar.*
*Loys* [*after a pause*]. Thou hast received some
insult worse than all, 199
Some outrage not to be endured —
[*To the* Guards.] Stand back!
He is my friend — more than my friend. Thou hast
Slain him upon that provocation.
*Guard.* No!
No provocation! 'T is a long devised
Conspiracy: the whole tribe is involved.

He is their Khalif — 't is on that pretence —
Their mighty Khalif who died long ago,
And now comes back to life and light again!
All is just now revealed, I know not how,
By one of his confederates — who, struck
With horror at this murder, first apprised
The Nuncio. As 't was said, we find this Djabal
Here where we take him.
*Djabal* [*aside*]. Who broke faith with me?
*Loys* [*to* DJABAL]. Hear'st thou? Speak! Till thou speak, I keep off these,
Or die with thee. Deny this story! Thou
A Khalif, an impostor? Thou, my friend,
Whose tale was of an inoffensive tribe,
With . . . but thou know'st — on that tale's truth I pledged
My faith before the Chapter: what art thou?
*Djabal.* Loys, I am as thou hast heard. All 's true.
No more concealment! As these tell thee, all
Was long since planned. Our Druses are enough
To crush this handful: the Venetians land
Even now in our behalf. Loys, we part.
Thou, serving much, wouldst fain have served me more;
It might not be. I thank thee. As thou hearest,
We are a separated tribe: farewell!
*Loys.* Oh where will truth be found now? Canst thou so
Belie the Druses? Do they share thy crime?
Those thou professest of our Breton stock,
Are partners with thee? Why, I saw but now
Khalil, my friend: he spoke with me — no word
Of this! and Anael — whom I love, and who
Loves me — she spoke no word of this.
*Djabal.* Poor boy!

Anael, who loves thee? Khalil, fast thy friend?
We, offsets from a wandering Count of Dreux?
No: older than the oldest, princelier
Than Europe's princeliest race, our tribe: enough
For thine, that on our simple faith we found
A monarchy to shame your monarchies
At their own trick and secret of success.
The child of this our tribe shall laugh upon
The palace-step of him whose life ere night
Is forfeit, as that child shall know, and yet
Shall laugh there! What, we Druses wait forsooth
The kind interposition of a boy
— Can only save ourselves if thou concede:
— Khalil admire thee? He is my right-hand,
My delegate! — Anael accept thy love?
She is my bride!

*Loys.* Thy bride? She one of them?

*Djabal.* My bride!

*Loys.* And she retains her glorious eyes!
She, with those eyes, has shared this miscreant's guilt!
Ah — who but she directed me to find
Djabal within the Prefect's chamber? Khalil
Bade me seek Djabal there, too. All is truth.
What spoke the Prefect worse of them than this?
Did the Church ill to institute long since
Perpetual warfare with such serpentry?
And I — have I desired to shift my part,
Evade my share in her design? 'T is well.

*Djabal.* Loys, I wronged thee — but unwittingly:
I never thought there was in thee a virtue
That could attach itself to what thou deemest
A race below thine own. I wronged thee, Loys,
But that is over: all is over now,
Save the protection I ensure against

My people's anger. By their Khalif's side,
Thou art secure and mayst depart: so, come!
*Loys.* Thy side? I take protection at thy hand?

*Enter other* Guards.

*Guards.* Fly with him! Fly, Sir Loys! 'T is too true:
And only by his side thou mayst escape.
The whole tribe is in full revolt: they flock
About the palace — will be here — on thee —
And there are twenty of us, we the Guards
O' the Nuncio, to withstand them! Even we
Had stayed to meet our death in ignorance,
But that one Druse, a single faithful Druse,
Made known the horror to the Nuncio. Fly!
The Nuncio stands aghast. At least let us
Escape thy wrath, O Hakeem! We are naught
In thy tribe's persecution! [*To* Loys.] Keep by him!
They hail him Hakeem, their dead Prince returned:
He is their God, they shout, and at his beck
Are life and death!
*Loys* [*springing at the khandjar* Djabal *had thrown down, seizes him by the throat*]. Thus by his side am I!
Thus I resume my knighthood and its warfare,
Thus end thee, miscreant, in thy pride of place!
Thus art thou caught. Without, thy dupes may cluster:
Friends aid thee, foes avoid thee, — thou art Hakeem,
How say they? — God art thou! but also here
Is the least, youngest, meanest the Church calls
Her servant, and his single arm avails
To aid her as she lists. I rise, and thou

Art crushed. Hordes of thy Druses flock without :
Here thou hast me, who represent the Cross,
Honor and Faith, 'gainst Hell, Mahound and thee.
Die! [DJABAL *remains calm.*] Implore my mercy,
Hakeem, that my scorn
May help me! Nay, I cannot ply thy trade ;
I am no Druse, no stabber : and thine eye,
Thy form, are too much as they were — my friend
Had such. Speak! Beg for mercy at my foot!
[DJABAL *still silent.*
Heaven could not ask so much of me — not, sure, 300
So much. I cannot kill him so.
[*After a pause.*] Thou art
Strong in thy cause, then — dost outbrave us, then.
Heardst thou that one of thine accomplices,
Thy very people, has accused thee? Meet
His charge! Thou hast not even slain the Prefect
As thy own vile creed warrants. Meet that Druse!
Come with me and disprove him — be thou tried
By him, nor seek appeal! Promise me this,
Or I will do God's office. What, shalt thou
Boast of assassins at thy beck, yet truth 310
Want even an executioner? Consent,
Or I will strike — look in my face — I will!
*Djabal.* Give me again my khandjar, if thou
darest! [LOYS *gives it.*
Let but one Druse accuse me, and I plunge
This home. A Druse betray me? Let us go!
[*Aside.*] Who has betrayed me? [*Shouts without.*
Hearest thou? I hear
No plainer than long years ago I heard
That shout — but in no dream now. They return!
Wilt thou be leader with me, Loys? Well.

## ACT V.

*The Uninitiated* Druses, *filling the hall tumultuously, and speaking together.*

Here flock we, obeying the summons. Lo, Hakeem hath appeared, and the Prefect is dead, and we return to Lebanon! My manufacture of goats' fleece must, I doubt, soon fall away there. Come, old Nasif — link thine arm in mine — we fight, if needs be. Come, what is a great fight-word? — "Lebanon"? (My daughter — my daughter!) — But is Khalil to have the office of Hamza? — Nay, rather, if he be wise, the monopoly of henna and cloves. Where is Hakeem? — The only prophet I ever saw, prophesied at Cairo once, in my youth: a little black Copht, dressed all in black too, with a great stripe of yellow cloth flapping down behind him like the back-fin of a water-serpent. Is this he? Biamrallah! Biamreh! HAKEEM!

*Enter the* NUNCIO, *with* Guards.

*Nuncio* [*to his* Attendants]. Hold both, the sorcerer and this accomplice
Ye talk of, that accuseth him! And tell
Sir Loys he is mine, the Church's hope:
Bid him approve himself our Knight indeed!
Lo, this black disemboguing of the Isle!
[*To the* Druses.] Ah children, what a sight for these old eyes
That kept themselves alive this voyage through
To smile their very last on you! I came
To gather one and all you wandering sheep

Into my fold, as though a father came . . .
As though, in coming, a father should . . .
[*To his* Guards.] (Ten, twelve
— Twelve guards of you, and not an outlet? None?
The wizards stop each avenue? Keep close!)
[*To the* Druses.] As if one came to a son's house, I say,
So did I come — no guard with me — to find . . .
Alas — alas!
*A Druse.* Who is the old man?
*Another.* Oh, ye are to shout!
Children, he styles you.
*Druses.* Ay, the Prefect 's slain!
Glory to the Khalif, our Father!
*Nuncio.* Even so
I find, (ye prompt aright) your father slain.
While most he plotted for your good, that father
(Alas, how kind, ye never knew) — lies slain.
[*Aside.*] (And hell's worm gnaw the glozing knave — with me,
For being duped by his cajoleries!
Are these the Christians? These the docile crew
My bezants went to make me Bishop o'er?)
[*To his* Attendants, *who whisper.*] What say ye does this wizard style himself?
Hakeem? Biamrallah? The third Fatemite?
What is this jargon? He — the insane Khalif,
Dead near three hundred years ago, come back
In flesh and blood again?
*Druses.* He mutters! Hear ye?
He is blaspheming Hakeem. The old man
Is our dead Prefect's friend. Tear him!
*Nuncio.* Ye dare not.
I stand here with my five-and-seventy years,

The Patriarch's power behind me, God's above.
Those years have witnessed sin enough; ere now
Misguided men arose against their lords,
And found excuse; but ye, to be enslaved
By sorceries, cheats — alas! the same tricks, tried
On my poor children in this nook o' the earth,
Could triumph, that have been successively
Exploded, laughed to scorn, all nations through:
" *Romaioi, Ioudaioite kai proselutoi,*
Cretes and Arabians " — you are duped the last.
Said I, refrain from tearing me? I pray ye
Tear me! Shall I return to tell the Patriarch
That so much love was wasted — every gift
Rejected, from his benison I brought,
Down to the galley-full of bezants, sunk
An hour since at the harbor's mouth, by that . . .
That . . . never will I speak his hated name!
[*To his* Servants.] What was the name his fellow slip-fetter
Called their arch-wizard by? [*They whisper.*] Oh, Djabal was 't?
*Druses.* But how a sorcerer? false wherein?
*Nuncio.* (Ay, Djabal!)
How false? Ye know not, Djabal has confessed . . .
Nay, that by tokens found on him we learn . . .
What I sailed hither solely to divulge —
How by his spells the demons were allured
To seize you: not that these be aught save lies
And mere illusions. Is this clear? I say,
By measures such as these, he would have led you
Into a monstrous ruin: follow ye?
Say, shall ye perish for his sake, my sons?
*Druses.* Hark ye!
*Nuncio.* — Be of one privilege amerced?

No! Infinite the Patriarch's mercies are!
No! With the Patriarch's license, still I bid
Tear him to pieces who misled you! Haste!

*Druses.* The old man's beard shakes, and his eyes are white fire! After all, I know nothing of Djabal beyond what Karshook says; he knows but what Khalil says, who knows just what Djabal says himself. Now, the little Copht Prophet, I saw at Cairo in my youth, began by promising each bystander three full measures of wheat . . .

*Enter* KHALIL *and the initiated* Druses.

*Khalil.* Venice and her deliverance are at hand: 89
Their fleet stands through the harbor. Hath he slain
The Prefect yet? Is Djabal's change come yet?

*Nuncio* [*to* Attendants]. What 's this of Venice?
Who 's this boy?

[Attendants *whisper.*] One Khalil?
Djabal's accomplice, Loys called, but now,
The only Druse, save Djabal's self, to fear?
[*To the Druses.*] I cannot hear ye with these aged ears:
Is it so? Ye would have my troops assist?
Doth he abet him in his sorceries?
Down with the cheat, guards, as my children bid!

[*They spring at* KHALIL; *as he beats them back,*
Stay! No more bloodshed! Spare deluded youth!
Whom seek'st thou? (I will teach him) — whom, my child? 100
Thou know'st not what these know, what these declare.
I am an old man as thou seest — have done
With life; and what should move me but the truth?

Art thou the only fond one of thy tribe?
'T is I interpret for thy tribe.
*Khalil.* Oh, this
Is the expected Nuncio! Druses, hear —
Endure ye this? Unworthy to partake
The glory Hakeem gains you! While I speak,
The ships touch land: who makes for Lebanon?
They plant the winged lion in these halls!
*Nuncio* [*aside*]. If it be true! Venice? Oh, never true!
Yet Venice would so gladly thwart our Knights,
So fain get footing here, stand close by Rhodes!
Oh, to be duped this way!
*Khalil.* Ere he appear
And lead you gloriously, repent, I say!
*Nuncio* [*aside*]. Nor any way to stretch the arch-wizard stark
Ere the Venetians come? Cut off the head,
The trunk were easily stilled. [*To the* Druses.] He? Bring him forth!
Since so you needs will have it, I assent.
You 'd judge him, say you, on the spot — confound
The sorcerer in his very circle? Where 's
Our short black-bearded sallow friend who swore
He 'd earn the Patriarch's guerdon by one stab?
Bring Djabal forth at once!
*Druses.* Ay, bring him forth!
The Patriarch drives a trade in oil and silk,
And we 're the Patriarch's children — true men, we!
Where is the glory? Show us all the glory!
*Khalil.* You dare not so insult him! What, not see . . .
(I tell thee, Nuncio, these are uninstructed,
Untrusted: they know nothing of our Khalif!)

— Not see that if he lets a doubt arise
'T is but to give yourselves the chance of seeming
To have some influence in your own return!
That all may say ye would have trusted him
Without the all-convincing glory — ay,
And did! Embrace the occasion, friends! For, think —
What wonder when his change takes place? But now
For your sakes, he should not reveal himself.
No: could I ask and have, I would not ask
The change yet!

*Enter* DJABAL *and* LOYS.

Spite of all, reveal thyself!
I had said, pardon them for me — for Anael —
For our sakes pardon these besotted men —
Ay, for thine own — they hurt not thee! Yet now
One thought swells in me and keeps down all else.
This Nuncio couples shame with thee, has called
Imposture thy whole course, all bitter things
Has said: he is but an old fretful man!
Hakeem — nay, I must call thee Hakeem now —
Reveal thyself! See! Where is Anael? See!

*Loys* [*to* DJABAL]. Here are thy people. Keep thy word to me!

*Djabal.* Who of my people hath accused me?

*Nuncio.* So!

So this is Djabal, Hakeem, and what not?
A fit deed, Loys, for thy first Knight's day!
May it be augury of thy after-life!
Ever prove truncheon of the Church as now
That, Nuncio of the Patriarch, having charge
Of the Isle here, I claim thee [*turning to* DJABAL] as these bid me,

Forfeit for murder done thy lawful prince,
Thou conjurer that peep'st and mutterest!
Why should I hold thee from their hands? (Spells,
children?
But hear how I dispose of all his spells!)
Thou art a prophet? — wouldst entice thy tribe
From me? — thou workest miracles? (Attend!
Let him but move me with his spells!) I, Nuncio . . .
*Djabal.* . . . Which how thou camest to be, I say
not now,
Though I have also been at Stamboul, Luke!
Ply thee with spells, forsooth! What need of spells?
If Venice, in her Admiral's person, stoop
To ratify thy compact with her foe,
The Hospitallers, for this Isle — withdraw
Her warrant of the deed which reinstates
My people in their freedom, tricked away
By him I slew, — refuse to convoy us
To Lebanon and keep the Isle we leave —
Then will be time to try what spells can do!
Dost thou dispute the Republic's power?
*Nuncio.* Lo ye!
He tempts me too, the wily exorcist!
No! The renowned Republic was and is
The Patriarch's friend: 't is not for courting Venice
That I — that these implore thy blood of me.
Lo ye, the subtle miscreant! Ha, so subtle?
Ye, Druses, hear him. Will ye be deceived?
How he evades me! Where 's the miracle
He works? I bid him to the proof — fish up
Your galley-full of bezants that he sank!
That were a miracle! One miracle!
Enough of trifling, for it chafes my years.
I am the Nuncio, Druses! I stand forth

To save you from the good Republic's rage
When she shall find her fleet was summoned here
To aid the mummeries of a knave like this.
[*As the* Druses *hesitate, his* Attendants *whisper.*
Ah, well suggested! Why, we hold the while
One who, his close confederate till now,
Confesses Djabal at the last a cheat,
And every miracle a cheat. Who throws me
His head? I make three offers, once I offer, —
And twice . . .
*Djabal.* Let who moves perish at my foot!
*Khalil.* Thanks, Hakeem, thanks! Oh, Anael, Maani,
Why tarry they?
*Druses* [*to each other*]. He can! He can! Live fire —
[*To the* Nuncio.] I say he can, old man! Thou know'st him not.
Live fire like that thou seest now in his eyes,
Plays fawning round him. See! The change begins.
All the brow lightens as he lifts his arm.
Look not at me! It was not I!
*Djabal.* What Druse
Accused me, as he saith? I bid each bone
Crumble within that Druse! None, Loys, none
Of my own people, as thou said'st, have raised
A voice against me.
*Nuncio* [*aside*]. Venice to come! Death!
*Djabal* [*continuing*]. Confess and go unscathed, however false!
Seest thou my Druses, Luke? I would submit
To thy pure malice did one Druse confess!
How said I, Loys?

*Nuncio* [*to his* Attendants *who whisper*]. Ah, ye counsel so ?
[*Aloud.*] Bring in the witness, then, who, first of all,
Disclosed the treason ! Now I have thee, wizard !
Ye hear that ? If one speaks, he bids you tear him
Joint after joint : well then, one does speak ! One,
Befooled by Djabal, even as yourselves,
But who hath voluntarily proposed
To expiate, by confessing thus, the fault
Of having trusted him. [*They bring in a veiled* Druse.
*Loys.* Now, Djabal, now ! 220
*Nuncio.* Friend, Djabal fronts thee ! Make a ring, sons. Speak !
Expose this Djabal — what he was, and how :
The wiles he used, the aims he cherished : all,
Explicitly as late 't was spoken to these
My servants : I absolve and pardon thee.
*Loys.* Thou hast the dagger ready, Djabal ?
*Djabal.* Speak,
Recreant !
*Druses.* Stand back, fool ! farther ! Suddenly
You shall see some huge serpent glide from under
The empty vest, or down will thunder crash !
Back, Khalil !
*Khalil.* I go back ? Thus go I back ! 230
[*To* Anael.] Unveil ! Nay, thou shalt face the Khalif ! Thus !
[*He tears away* Anael's *veil ;* Djabal *folds his arms and bows his head ; the* Druses *fall back ;* Loys *springs from the side of* Djabal *and the* Nuncio.
*Loys.* Then she was true — she only of them all !
True to her eyes — may keep those glorious eyes,
And now be mine, once again mine ! Oh, Anael !

Dared I think thee a partner in his crime —
That blood could soil that hand? nay, 't is mine — Anael,
— Not mine? — who offer thee before all these
My heart, my sword, my name — so thou wilt say
That Djabal, who affirms thou art his bride,
Lies — say but that he lies!
*Djabal.* Thou, Anael?
*Loys.* Nay, Djabal, nay, one chance for me — the last!
Thou hast had every other; thou hast spoken
Days, nights, what falsehood listed thee — let me
Speak first now; I will speak now!
*Nuncio.* Loys, pause!
Thou art the Duke's son, Bretagne's choicest stock,
Loys of Dreux, God's sepulchre's first sword:
This wilt thou spit on, this degrade, this trample
To earth?
*Loys* [*to* ANAEL]. Who had foreseen that one day Loys
Would stake these gifts against some other good
In the whole world? I give them thee! I would
My strong will might bestow real shape on them,
That I might see, with my own eyes, thy foot
Tread on their very neck! 'T is not by gifts
I put aside this Djabal: we will stand —
We do stand, see, two men! Djabal, stand forth!
Who 's worth her, I or thou? I — who for Anael
Uprightly, purely kept my way, the long
True way — left thee each by-path, boldly lived
Without the lies and blood, — or thou, or thou?
Me! love me, Anael! Leave the blood and him!
[*To* DJABAL.] Now speak — now, quick on this that I have said, —
Thou with the blood, speak if thou art a man!

*Djabal* [*to* ANAEL]. And was it thou betrayedst
me? 'T is well!
I have deserved this of thee, and submit.
Nor 't is much evil thou inflictest: life
Ends here. The cedars shall not wave for us:
For there was crime, and must be punishment.
See fate! By thee I was seduced, by thee
I perish: yet do I — can I repent?
I with my Arab instinct, thwarted ever
By my Frank policy, — and with, in turn,
My Frank brain, thwarted by my Arab heart —
While these remained in equipoise, I lived
— Nothing; had either been predominant,
As a Frank schemer or an Arab mystic,
I had been something; — now, each has destroyed
The other — and behold, from out their crash,
A third and better nature rises up —
My mere man's-nature! And I yield to it:
I love thee, I who did not love before!

*Anael.* Djabal!

*Djabal.* It seemed love, but it was not love:
How could I love while thou adoredst me?
Now thou despisest, art above me so
Immeasurably! Thou, no other, doomest
My death now; this my steel shall execute
Thy judgment; I shall feel thy hand in it.
Oh luxury to worship, to submit,
Transcended, doomed to death by thee!

*Anael.* My Djabal!

*Djabal.* Dost hesitate? I force thee then. Approach,
Druses! for I am out of reach of fate;
No further evil waits me. Speak the doom!
Hear, Druses, and hear, Nuncio, and hear, Loys!

*Anael.* HAKEEM! [*She falls dead.*

[*The* Druses *scream, grovelling before him.*

*Druses.* Ah Hakeem! — not on me thy wrath!
Biamrallah, pardon! never doubted I!
Ha, dog, how sayest thou?

[*They surround and seize the* NUNCIO *and his* Guards. LOYS *flings himself upon the body of* ANAEL, *on which* DJABAL *continues to gaze as stupefied.*

*Nuncio.* Caitiffs! Have ye eyes?
Whips, racks should teach you! What, his fools? his dupes?
Leave me! Unhand me!

*Khalil* [*approaching* DJABAL *timidly*]. Save her for my sake!
She was already thine; she would have shared
To-day thine exaltation: think, this day
Her hair was plaited thus because of thee!
Yes, feel the soft bright hair — feel!

*Nuncio* [*struggling with those who have seized him*]. What, because
His leman dies for him? You think it hard
To die? Oh, would you were at Rhodes, and choice
Of deaths should suit you!

*Khalil* [*bending over* ANAEL'S *body*]. Just restore her life!
So little does it! there — the eyelids tremble!
'T was not my breath that made them: and the lips
Move of themselves. I could restore her life!
Hakeem, we have forgotten — have presumed
On our free converse: we are better taught.
See, I kiss — how I kiss thy garment's hem
For her! She kisses it — Oh, take her deed
In mine! Thou dost believe now, Anael? — See,

She smiles! Were her lips open o'er the teeth
Thus, when I spoke first? She believes in thee!
Go not without her to the cedars, lord!
Or leave us both — I cannot go alone!
I have obeyed thee, if I dare so speak:
Hath Hakeem thus forgot all Djabal knew?
Thou feelest then my tears fall hot and fast
Upon thy hand, and yet thou speakest not?
Ere the Venetian trumpet sound — ere thou
Exalt thyself, O Hakeem! save thou her!
*Nuncio.* And the accursed Republic will arrive
And find me in their toils — dead, very like,
Under their feet!
What way — not one way yet
To foil them? None? [*Observing* DJABAL'S *face.*
What ails the Khalif? Ah,
That ghastly face! A way to foil them yet!
[*To the* Druses.] Look to your Khalif, Druses! Is
that face
God Hakeem's? Where is triumph, — where is . . .
what
Said he of exaltation — hath he promised
So much to-day? Why then, exalt thyself!
Cast off that husk, thy form, set free thy soul
In splendor! Now, bear witness! here I stand —
I challenge him exalt himself, and I
Become, for that, a Druse like all of you!
*The Druses.* Exalt thyself! Exalt thyself, O
Hakeem!
*Djabal* [*advances*]. I can confess now all from
first to last.
There is no longer shame for me. I am . . .
[*Here the Venetian trumpet sounds: the* Druses
*shout,* DJABAL'S *eye catches the expression of those*

*about him, and, as the old dream comes back, he is again confident and inspired.*

— Am I not Hakeem? And ye would have crawled
But yesterday within these impure courts
Where now ye stand erect! Not grand enough?
— What more could be conceded to such beasts
As all of you, so sunk and base as you,
Than a mere man? A man among such beasts
Was miracle enough: yet him you doubt,
Him you forsake, him fain would you destroy —
With the Venetians at your gate, the Nuncio
Thus — (see the baffled hypocrite!) and, best,
The Prefect there!

*Druses.* No, Hakeem, ever thine!

*Nuncio.* He lies — and twice he lies — and thrice he lies!

Exalt thyself, Mahound! Exalt thyself!

*Djabal.* Druses! we shall henceforth be far away —
Out of mere mortal ken — above the cedars —
But we shall see ye go, hear ye return,
Repeopling the old solitudes, — through thee,
My Khalil! Thou art full of me: I fill
Thee full — my hands thus fill thee! Yestereve,
— Nay, but this morn, I deemed thee ignorant
Of all to do, requiring word of mine
To teach it: now, thou hast all gifts in one,
With truth and purity go other gifts,
All gifts come clustering to that. Go, lead
My people home whate'er betide!
[*Turning to the* Druses.] Ye take
This Khalil for my delegate? To him
Bow as to me? He leads to Lebanon —
Ye follow?

*Druses.* We follow! Now exalt thyself!
*Djabal* [*raises* Loys]. Then to thee, Loys! How
I wronged thee, Loys!
Yet, wronged, no less thou shalt have full revenge,
Fit for thy noble self, revenge — and thus.
Thou, loaded with such wrongs, the princely soul,
The first sword of Christ's sepulchre — thou shalt
Guard Khalil and my Druses home again!
Justice, no less, God's justice and no more,
For those I leave! To seeking this, devote
Some few days out of thy Knight's brilliant life:
And, this obtained them, leave their Lebanon,
My Druses' blessing in thine ears — (they shall
Bless thee with blessing sure to have its way)
— One cedar-blossom in thy ducal cap,
One thought of Anael in thy heart, — perchance,
One thought of him who thus, to bid thee speed,
His last word to the living speaks! This done,
Resume thy course, and, first amidst the first
In Europe, take my heart along with thee!
Go boldly, go serenely, go augustly —
What shall withstand thee then?
[*He bends over* Anael.] And last to thee!
Ah, did I dream I was to have, this day,
Exalted thee? A vain dream: hast thou not
Won greater exaltation? What remains
But press to thee, exalt myself to thee?
Thus I exalt myself, set free my soul!
[*He stabs himself. As he falls, supported by* Khalil *and* Loys, *the* Venetians *enter; the* Admiral *advances.*
*Admiral.* God and St. Mark for Venice! Plant the
Lion!

[*At the clash of the planted standard, the* Druses *shout and move tumultuously forward,* Loys *drawing his sword.*

*Djabal* [*leading them a few steps between* Khalil *and* Loys]. On to the Mountain! At the Mountain, Druses! [*Dies.*

# A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON;

## A TRAGEDY.

1843.

## A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON.

*PERSONS.*

MILDRED TRESHAM.
GUENDOLEN TRESHAM.
THOROLD, Earl Tresham.
AUSTIN TRESHAM.
HENRY, Earl Mertoun.
GERARD, *and other retainers of* Lord Tresham.

TIME, 17—.

### ACT I.

SCENE I. — *The interior of a lodge in* LORD TRESHAM'S *park. Many* Retainers *crowded at the window, supposed to command a view of the entrance to his mansion.* GERARD, *the warrener, his back to a table on which are flagons, etc.*

1*st Retainer.* Ay, do! push, friends, and then you 'll push down me!
— What for? Does any hear a runner's foot
Or a steed's trample or a coach-wheel's cry?
Is the Earl come or his least poursuivant?

But there 's no breeding in a man of you
Save Gerard yonder: here 's a half-place yet,
Old Gerard!
*Gerard.* Save your courtesies, my friend.
Here is my place.
*2nd Retainer.* Now, Gerard, out with it!
What makes you sullen, this of all the days
I' the year? To-day that young rich bountiful
Handsome Earl Mertoun, whom alone they match
With our Lord Tresham through the country-side,
Is coming here in utmost bravery
To ask our master's sister's hand?
*Gerard.* What then?
*2nd Retainer.* What then? Why, you, she speaks to, if she meets
Your worship, smiles on as you hold apart
The boughs to let her through her forest walks,
You, always favorite for your no-deserts,
You 've heard, these three days, how Earl Mertoun sues
To lay his heart and house and broad lands too
At Lady Mildred's feet: and while we squeeze
Ourselves into a mousehole lest we miss
One congee of the least page in his train,
You sit o' one side — "there 's the Earl," say I —
"What then?" say you!
*3rd Retainer.* I 'll wager he has let
Both swans he tamed for Lady Mildred swim
Over the falls and gain the river!
*Gerard.* Ralph,
Is not to-morrow my inspecting-day
For you and for your hawks?
*4th Retainer.* Let Gerard be!
He 's coarse-grained, like his carved black cross-bow stock.

Ha, look now, while we squabble with him, look!
Well done, now — is not this beginning, now,
To purpose?
*1st Retainer.* Our retainers look as fine —
That 's comfort. Lord, how Richard holds himself
With his white staff! Will not a knave behind
Prick him upright?
*4th Retainer.* He 's only bowing, fool!
The Earl's man bent us lower by this much.
*1st Retainer.* That 's comfort. Here 's a very cavalcade!
*3rd Retainer.* I don't see wherefore Richard, and his troop
Of silk and silver varlets there, should find
Their perfumed selves so indispensable
On high days, holidays! Would it so disgrace
Our family, if I, for instance, stood —
In my right hand a cast of Swedish hawks,
A leash of greyhounds in my left? —
*Gerard.* — With Hugh
The logman for supporter, in his right
The bill-hook, in his left the brushwood-shears!
*3rd Retainer.* Out on you, crab! What next, what next? The Earl!
*1st Retainer.* Oh Walter, groom, our horses, do they match
The Earl's? Alas, that first pair of the six —
They paw the ground — Ah Walter! and that brute
Just on his haunches by the wheel!
*6th Retainer.* Ay — ay!
You, Philip, are a special hand, I hear,
At soups and sauces: what 's a horse to you?
D' ye mark that beast they 've slid into the midst

So cunningly? — then, Philip, mark this further;
No leg has he to stand on!
*1st Retainer.* No? That 's comfort.
*2nd Retainer.* Peace, Cook! The Earl descends.
Well, Gerard, see
The Earl at least! Come, there 's a proper man,
I hope! Why, Ralph, no falcon, Pole or Swede,
Has got a starrier eye.
*3rd Retainer.* His eyes are blue:
But leave my hawks alone!
*4th Retainer.* So young, and yet
So tall and shapely!
*5th Retainer.* Here 's Lord Tresham's self!
There now — there 's what a nobleman should be!
He 's older, graver, loftier, he 's more like
A House's head.
*2nd Retainer.* But you 'd not have a boy
— And what 's the Earl beside? — possess too soon
That stateliness?
*1st Retainer.* Our master takes his hand —
Richard and his white staff are on the move —
Back fall our people — (tsh! — there 's Timothy
Sure to get tangled in his ribbon-ties,
And Peter's cursed rosette 's a-coming off!)
— At last I see our lord's back and his friend's;
And the whole beautiful bright company
Close round them — in they go! [*Jumping down from the window-bench, and making for the table and its jugs.*]
Good health, long life,
Great joy to our Lord Tresham and his House!
*6th Retainer.* My father drove his father first to court,
After his marriage-day — ay, did he!

*2nd Retainer.* God bless
Lord Tresham, Lady Mildred, and the Earl!
Here, Gerard, reach your beaker!
*Gerard.* Drink, my boys!
Don't mind me — all 's not right about me — drink!
*2nd Retainer* [*aside*]. He 's vexed, now, that he let the show escape!
[*To* GERARD.] Remember that the Earl returns this way.
*Gerard.* That way?
*2nd Retainer.* Just so.
*Gerard.* Then my way 's here. [*Goes.*
*2nd Retainer.* Old Gerard
Will die soon — mind, I said it! He was used
To care about the pitifullest thing
That touched the House's honor, not an eye
But his could see wherein: and on a cause
Of scarce a quarter this importance, Gerard
Fairly had fretted flesh and bone away
In cares that this was right, nor that was wrong,
Such point decorous, and such square by rule —
He knew such niceties, no herald more:
And now — you see his humor: die he will!
*2nd Retainer.* God help him! Who 's for the great servants'-hall
To hear what 's going on inside? They 'd follow
Lord Tresham into the saloon.
*3rd Retainer.* I! —
*4th Retainer.* I! —
Leave Frank alone for catching, at the door,
Some hint of how the parley goes inside!
Prosperity to the great House once more!
Here 's the last drop!
*1st Retainer.* Have at you! Boys, hurrah!

SCENE II. — *A Saloon in the Mansion.*

*Enter* LORD TRESHAM, LORD MERTOUN, AUSTIN, *and* GUENDOLEN.

*Tresham.* I welcome you, Lord Mertoun, yet once more,
To this ancestral roof of mine. Your name
— Noble among the noblest in itself,
Yet taking in your person, fame avers,
New price and lustre, — (as that gem you wear,
Transmitted from a hundred knightly breasts,
Fresh chased and set and fixed by its last lord,
Seems to re-kindle at the core) — your name
Would win you welcome ! —
*Mertoun.* Thanks !
*Tresham.* — But add to that,
The worthiness and grace and dignity
Of your proposal for uniting both
Our Houses even closer than respect
Unites them now — add these, and you must grant
One favor more, nor that the least, — to think
The welcome I should give ; — 't is given ! My lord,
My only brother, Austin : he 's the king's.
Our cousin, Lady Guendolen — betrothed
To Austin : all are yours.
*Mertoun.* I thank you — less
For the expressed commendings which your seal,
And only that, authenticates — forbids
My putting from me . . . to my heart I take
Your praise . . . but praise less claims my gratitude,
Than the indulgent insight it implies
Of what must needs be uppermost with one

Who comes, like me, with the bare leave to ask,
In weighed and measured unimpassioned words,
A gift, which, if as calmly 't is denied,
He must withdraw, content upon his cheek,
Despair within his soul. That I dare ask
Firmly, near boldly, near with confidence
That gift, I have to thank you. Yes, Lord Tresham,
I love your sister — as you 'd have one love
That lady . . . oh more, more I love her! Wealth,
Rank, all the world thinks me, they 're yours, you know,
To hold or part with, at your choice — but grant
My true self, me without a rood of land,
A piece of gold, a name of yesterday,
Grant me that lady, and you . . . Death or life?

*Guendolen* [*apart to* AUSTIN]. Why, this is loving, Austin!

*Austin.* He 's so young!

*Guendolen.* Young? Old enough, I think, to half surmise
He never had obtained an entrance here,
Were all this fear and trembling needed.

*Austin.* Hush!

He reddens.

*Guendolen.* Mark him, Austin; that 's true love!
Ours must begin again.

*Tresham.* We 'll sit, my lord.
Ever with best desert goes diffidence.
I may speak plainly nor be misconceived.
That I am wholly satisfied with you
On this occasion, when a falcon's eye
Were dull compared with mine to search out faults,
Is somewhat. Mildred's hand is hers to give
Or to refuse.

*Mertoun.* But you, you grant my suit?
I have your word if hers?
*Tresham.* My best of words
If hers encourage you. I trust it will.
Have you seen Lady Mildred, by the way?
*Mertoun.* I . . . I . . . our two demesnes, remember, touch;
I have been used to wander carelessly
After my stricken game: the heron roused
Deep in my woods, has trailed its broken wing
Thro' thicks and glades a mile in yours, — or else
Some eyass ill-reclaimed has taken flight
And lured me after her from tree to tree,
I marked not whither. I have come upon
The lady's wondrous beauty unaware,
And — and then . . . I have seen her.
*Guendolen* [*aside to* Austin]. Note that mode
Of faltering out that, when a lady passed,
He, having eyes, did see her! You had said —
"On such a day I scanned her, head to foot;
Observed a red, where red should not have been,
Outside her elbow; but was pleased enough
Upon the whole." Let such irreverent talk
Be lessoned for the future!
*Tresham.* What's to say
May be said briefly. She has never known
A mother's care; I stand for father too.
Her beauty is not strange to you, it seems —
You cannot know the good and tender heart,
Its girl's trust and its woman's constancy,
How pure yet passionate, how calm yet kind,
How grave yet joyous, how reserved yet free
As light where friends are — how imbued with lore
The world most prizes, yet the simplest, yet

The . . . one might know I talked of Mildred — thus
We brothers talk !
*Mertoun.* I thank you.
*Tresham.* In a word,
Control 's not for this lady ; but her wish
To please me outstrips in its subtlety
My power of being pleased : herself creates
The want she means to satisfy. My heart
Prefers your suit to her as 't were its own.
Can I say more ?
*Mertoun.* No more — thanks, thanks — no more !
*Tresham.* This matter then discussed . . .
*Mertoun.* — We 'll waste no breath
On aught less precious. I 'm beneath the roof
Which holds her : while I thought of that, my speech
To you would wander — as it must not do,
Since as you favor me I stand or fall.
I pray you suffer that I take my leave !
*Tresham.* With less regret 't is suffered, that again
We meet, I hope, so shortly.
*Mertoun.* We ? again ? —
Ah yes, forgive me — when shall . . . you will crown
Your goodness by forthwith apprising me
When . . . if . . . the lady will appoint a day
For me to wait on you — and her.
*Tresham.* So soon
As I am made acquainted with her thoughts
On your proposal — howsoe'er they lean —
A messenger shall bring you the result.
*Mertoun.* You cannot bind me more to you, my lord.
Farewell till we renew . . . I trust, renew
A converse ne'er to disunite again.

*Tresham.* So may it prove!
*Mertoun.* You, lady, you, sir, take
My humble salutation!
*Guendolen and Austin.* Thanks!
*Tresham.* Within there!
[Servants *enter*. TRESHAM *conducts* MERTOUN *to the door*. *Meantime* AUSTIN *remarks*,
Well,
Here I have an advantage of the Earl,
Confess now! I 'd not think that all was safe
Because my lady's brother stood my friend!
Why, he makes sure of her — "do you say, yes —
She 'll not say, no," — what comes it to beside?
I should have prayed the brother, "speak this speech,
For Heaven's sake urge this on her — put in this —
Forget not, as you 'd save me, t' other thing, —
Then set down what she says, and how she looks,
And if she smiles, and" (in an under breath)
"Only let her accept me, and do you
And all the world refuse me, if you dare!"
*Guendolen.* That way you 'd take, friend Austin?
What a shame
I was your cousin, tamely from the first
Your bride, and all this fervor 's run to waste!
Do you know you speak sensibly to-day?
The Earl 's a fool.
*Austin.* Here 's Thorold. Tell him so!
*Tresham* [*returning*]. Now, voices, voices! 'St!
the lady 's first!
How seems he? — seems he not . . . come, faith give
fraud
The mercy-stroke whenever they engage!
Down with fraud, up with faith! How seems the
Earl?

A name! a blazon! if you knew their worth,
As you will never! come — the Earl?
*Guendolen.* He 's young.
*Tresham.* What 's she? an infant save in heart and brain.
Young! Mildred is fourteen, remark! And you . . .
Austin, how old is she?
*Guendolen.* There 's tact for you!
I meant that being young was good excuse
If one should tax him . . .
*Tresham.* Well?
*Guendolen.* — With lacking wit.
*Tresham.* He lacked wit? Where might he lack wit, so please you?
*Guendolen.* In standing straighter than the steward's rod
And making you the tiresomest harangue,
Instead of slipping over to my side
And softly whispering in my ear, "Sweet lady,
Your cousin there will do me detriment
He little dreams of: he 's absorbed, I see,
In my old name and fame — be sure he 'll leave
My Mildred, when his best account of me
Is ended, in full confidence I wear
My grandsire's periwig down either cheek.
I 'm lost unless your gentleness vouchsafes" . . .
*Tresham.* . . . "To give a best of best accounts, yourself,
Of me and my demerits." You are right!
He should have said what now I say for him.
Yon golden creature, will you help us all?
Here 's Austin means to vouch for much, but you
— You are . . . what Austin only knows! Come up,

All three of us: she 's in the library
No doubt, for the day 's wearing fast. Precede!
*Guendolen.* Austin, how we must — !
*Tresham.* Must what? Must speak truth,
Malignant tongue! Detect one fault in him!
I challenge you!
*Guendolen.* Witchcraft 's a fault in him,
For you 're bewitched.
*Tresham.* What 's urgent we obtain
Is, that she soon receive him — say, to-morrow —
Next day at furthest.
*Guendolen.* Ne'er instruct me!
*Tresham.* Come!
— He 's out of your good graces, since forsooth,
He stood not as he 'd carry us by storm
With his perfections! You 're for the composed
Manly assured becoming confidence!
— Get her to say, "to-morrow," and I 'll give you . . .
I 'll give you black Urganda, to be spoiled
With petting and snail-paces. Will you? Come!

SCENE III. — MILDRED'S *chamber*. *A painted window overlooks the park*. MILDRED *and* GUENDOLEN.

*Guendolen.* Now, Mildred, spare those pains. I have not left
Our talkers in the library, and climbed
The wearisome ascent to this your bower
In company with you, — I have not dared . . .
Nay, worked such prodigies as sparing you
Lord Mertoun's pedigree before the flood,
Which Thorold seemed in very act to tell
— Or bringing Austin to pluck up that most
Firm-rooted heresy — your suitor's eyes,

He would maintain, were gray instead of blue —
I think I brought him to contrition ! — Well,
I have not done such things, (all to deserve
A minute's quiet cousin's talk with you,)
To be dismissed so coolly.
*Mildred.* Guendolen !
What have I done ? what could suggest . . .
*Guendolen.* There, there !
Do I not comprehend you 'd be alone
To throw those testimonies in a heap,
Thorold's enlargings, Austin's brevities,
With that poor silly heartless Guendolen's
Ill-timed misplaced attempted smartnesses —
And sift their sense out ? now, I come to spare you
Nearly a whole night's labor. Ask and have !
Demand, be answered ! Lack I ears and eyes ?
Am I perplexed which side of the rock-table
The Conqueror dined on when he landed first,
Lord Mertoun's ancestor was bidden take —
The bow-hand or the arrow-hand's great meed ?
Mildred, the Earl has soft blue eyes !
*Mildred.* My brother —
Did he . . . you said that he received him well ?
*Guendolen.* If I said only " well " I said not much.
Oh, stay — which brother ?
*Mildred.* Thorold ! who — who else ?
*Guendolen.* Thorold (a secret) is too proud by half, —
Nay, hear me out — with us he 's even gentler
Than we are with our birds. Of this great House
The least retainer that e'er caught his glance
Would die for him, real dying — no mere talk :
And in the world, the court, if men would cite
The perfect spirit of honor, Thorold's name

Rises of its clear nature to their lips.
But he should take men's homage, trust in it,
And care no more about what drew it down.
He has desert, and that, acknowledgment;
Is he content?
*Mildred.* You wrong him, Guendolen.
*Guendolen.* He 's proud, confess; so proud with brooding o'er
The light of his interminable line,
An ancestry with men all paladins,
And women all . . .
*Mildred.* Dear Guendolen, 't is late!
When yonder purple pane the climbing moon
Pierces, I know 't is midnight.
*Guendolen.* Well, that Thorold
Should rise up from such musings, and receive
One come audaciously to graft himself
Into this peerless stock, yet find no flaw,
No slightest spot in such an one . . .
*Mildred.* Who finds
A spot in Mertoun?
*Guendolen.* Not your brother; therefore,
Not the whole world.
*Mildred.* I am weary, Guendolen.
Bear with me!
*Guendolen.* I am foolish.
*Mildred.* Oh no, kind!
But I would rest.
*Guendolen.* Good night and rest to you!
I said how gracefully his mantle lay
Beneath the rings of his light hair?
*Mildred.* Brown hair.
*Guendolen.* Brown? why, it *is* brown: how could you know that?

*Mildred.* How? did not you — Oh, Austin 't was, declared
His hair was light, not brown — my head! — and look,
The moon-beam purpling the dark chamber! Sweet,
Good night!

*Guendolen.* Forgive me — sleep the soundlier for me!
[*Going, she turns suddenly.*
Mildred!
Perdition! all 's discovered! Thorold finds
— That the Earl's greatest of all grandmothers
Was grander daughter still — to that fair dame
Whose garter slipped down at the famous dance! [*Goes.*

*Mildred.* Is she — can she be really gone at last?
My heart! I shall not reach the window. Needs
Must I have sinned much, so to suffer.
[*She lifts the small lamp which is suspended before the Virgin's image in the window, and places it by the purple pane.*
There!
[*She returns to the seat in front.*
Mildred and Mertoun! Mildred, with consent
Of all the world and Thorold, Mertoun's bride!
Too late! 'T is sweet to think of, sweeter still
To hope for, that this blessed end soothes up
The curse of the beginning; but I know
It comes too late: 't will sweetest be of all
To dream my soul away and die upon.
[*A noise without.*
The voice! Oh why, why glided sin the snake
Into the paradise Heaven meant us both?
[*The window opens softly. A low voice sings.*

*There 's a woman like a dew-drop, she 's so purer than the purest;*

*And her noble heart's the noblest, yes, and her sure faith's the surest:*
*And her eyes are dark and humid, like the depth on depth of lustre*
*Hid i' the harebell, while her tresses, sunnier than the wild-grape cluster,*
*Gush in golden-tinted plenty down her neck's rose-misted marble:*
*Then her voice's music . . . call it the well's bubbling the bird's warble!*

[*A figure wrapped in a mantle appears at the window.*

*And this woman says, "My days were sunless and my nights were moonless,*
*Parched the pleasant April herbage, and the lark's heart's outbreak tuneless,*
*If you loved me not!" And I who — (ah, for words of flame!) adore her,*
*Who am mad to lay my spirit prostrate palpably before her —*

[*He enters, approaches her seat, and bends over her.*

*I may enter at her portal soon, as now her lattice takes me,*
*And by noontide as by midnight make her mine, as hers she makes me!*

[*The* Earl *throws off his slouched hat and long cloak.*

My very heart sings, so I sing, Beloved!

*Mildred.* Sit, Henry — do not take my hand!

*Mertoun.* 'T is mine.

The meeting that appalled us both so much
Is ended.

*Mildred.* What begins now ?
*Mertoun.* Happiness
Such as the world contains not.
*Mildred.* That is it.
Our happiness would, as you say, exceed
The whole world's best of blisses : we — do we
Deserve that ? Utter to your soul, what mine
Long since, Beloved, has grown used to hear,
Like a death-knell, so much regarded once,
And so familiar now ; this will not be !
*Mertoun.* Oh, Mildred, have I met your brother's face ?
Compelled myself — if not to speak untruth,
Yet to disguise, to shun, to put aside
The truth, as — what had e'er prevailed on me
Save you, to venture ? Have I gained at last
Your brother, the one scarer of your dreams,
And waking thoughts' sole apprehension too ?
Does a new life, like a young sunrise, break
On the strange unrest of our night, confused
With rain and stormy flaw — and will you see
No dripping blossoms, no fire-tinted drops
On each live spray, no vapor steaming up,
And no expressless glory in the East ?
When I am by you, to be ever by you,
When I have won you and may worship you,
Oh, Mildred, can you say "this will not be" ?
*Mildred.* Sin has surprised us, so will punishment.
*Mertoun.* No — me alone, who sinned alone !
*Mildred.* The night
You likened our past life to — was it storm
Throughout to you then, Henry ?
*Mertoun.* Of your life
I spoke — what am I, what my life, to waste

A thought about when you are by me? — you
It was, I said my folly called the storm
And pulled the night upon. 'T was day with me —
Perpetual dawn with me.
*Mildred.* Come what, come will,
You have been happy: take my hand!
*Mertoun* [*after a pause*]. How good
Your brother is! I figured him a cold —
Shall I say, haughty man?
*Mildred.* They told me all.
I know all.
*Mertoun.* It will soon be over.
*Mildred.* Over?
Oh, what is over? what must I live through
And say, "'t is over"? Is our meeting over?
Have I received in presence of them all
The partner of my guilty love — with brow
Trying to seem a maiden's brow — with lips
Which make believe that when they strive to form
Replies to you and tremble as they strive,
It is the nearest ever they approached
A stranger's . . . Henry, yours that stranger's . . .
lip —
With cheek that looks a virgin's, and that is . . .
Ah God, some prodigy of thine will stop
This planned piece of deliberate wickedness
In its birth even! some fierce leprous spot
Will mar the brow's dissimulating! I
Shall murmur no smooth speeches got by heart,
But, frenzied, pour forth all our woful story,
The love, the shame, and the despair — with them
Round me aghast as round some cursed fount
That should spirt water, and spouts blood. I 'll not
. . . Henry, you do not wish that I should draw

This vengeance down ? I 'll not affect a grace
That 's gone from me — gone once, and gone forever !
*Mertoun.* Mildred, my honor is your own. I 'll share
Disgrace I cannot suffer by myself.
A word informs your brother I retract
This morning's offer ; time will yet bring forth
Some better way of saving both of us.
*Mildred.* I 'll meet their faces, Henry !
*Mertoun.* When ? to-morrow !
Get done with it !
*Mildred.* Oh, Henry, not to-morrow !
Next day ! I never shall prepare my words
And looks and gestures sooner. — How you must
Despise me !
*Mertoun.* Mildred, break it if you choose,
A heart the love of you uplifted — still
Uplifts, thro' this protracted agony,
To heaven ! but Mildred, answer me, — first pace
The chamber with me — once again — now, say
Calmly the part, the . . . what it is of me
You see contempt (for you did say contempt)
— Contempt for you in ! I would pluck it off
And cast it from me ! — but no — no, you 'll not
Repeat that ? — will you, Mildred, repeat that ?
*Mildred.* Dear Henry !
*Mertoun.* I was scarce a boy — e'en now
What am I more ? And you were infantine
When first I met you ; why, your hair fell loose
On either side ! My fool's-cheek reddens now
Only in the recalling how it burned
That morn to see the shape of many a dream
— You know we boys are prodigal of charms
To her we dream of — I had heard of one,

Had dreamed of her, and I was close to her,
Might speak to her, might live and die her own,
Who knew? I spoke. Oh, Mildred, feel you not
That now, while I remember every glance
Of yours, each word of yours, with power to test
And weigh them in the diamond scales of pride,
Resolved the treasure of a first and last
Heart's love shall have been bartered at its worth,
— That now I think upon your purity
And utter ignorance of guilt — your own
Or other's guilt — the girlish undisguised
Delight at a strange novel prize — (I talk
A silly language, but interpret, you!)
If I, with fancy at its full, and reason
Scarce in its germ, enjoined you secrecy,
If you had pity on my passion, pity
On my protested sickness of the soul
To sit beside you, hear you breathe, and watch
Your eyelids and the eyes beneath — if you
Accorded gifts and knew not they were gifts —
If I grew mad at last with enterprise
And must behold my beauty in her bower
Or perish — (I was ignorant of even
My own desires — what then were you?) if sorrow —
Sin — if the end came — must I now renounce
My reason, blind myself to light, say truth
Is false and lie to God and my own soul?
Contempt were all of this!

*Mildred.* Do you believe . . .
Or, Henry, I'll not wrong you — you believe
That I was ignorant. I scarce grieve o'er
The past. We'll love on; you will love me still.

*Mertoun.* Oh, to love less what one has injured! Dove,
Whose pinion I have rashly hurt, my breast —

Shall my heart's warmth not nurse thee into strength?
Flower I have crushed, shall I not care for thee?
Bloom o'er my crest, my fight-mark and device!
Mildred, I love you and you love me.
*Mildred.* Go!
Be that your last word. I shall sleep to-night.
*Mertoun.* This is not our last meeting?
*Mildred.* One night more.
*Mertoun.* And then — think, then!
*Mildred.* Then, no sweet courtship-days,
No dawning consciousness of love for us,
No strange and palpitating births of sense
From words and looks, no innocent fears and hopes,
Reserves and confidences: morning 's over!
*Mertoun.* How else should love's perfected noontide follow?
All the dawn promised shall the day perform.
*Mildred.* So may it be! but ——
You are cautious, Love?
Are sure that unobserved you scaled the walls?
*Mertoun.* Oh, trust me! Then our final meeting 's fixed
To-morrow night?
*Mildred.* Farewell! Stay, Henry . . . wherefore?
His foot is on the yew-tree bough; the turf
Receives him: now the moonlight as he runs
Embraces him — but he must go — is gone.
Ah, once again he turns — thanks, thanks, my Love!
He 's gone. Oh, I 'll believe him every word!
I was so young, I loved him so, I had
No mother, God forgot me, and I fell.
There may be pardon yet: all 's doubt beyond.
Surely the bitterness of death is past.

## ACT II.

SCENE. — *The Library.*

*Enter* LORD TRESHAM, *hastily.*

*Tresham.* This way! In, Gerard, quick!
[*As* GERARD *enters,* TRESHAM *secures the door.*
Now speak! or, wait —
I'll bid you speak directly. [*Seats himself.*
Now repeat
Firmly and circumstantially the tale
You just now told me; it eludes me; either
I did not listen, or the half is gone
Away from me. How long have you lived here?
Here in my house, your father kept our woods
Before you?
*Gerard.* — As his father did, my lord.
I have been eating, sixty years almost,
Your bread.
*Tresham.* Yes, yes. You ever were of all
The servants in my father's house, I know,
The trusted one. You 'll speak the truth.
*Gerard.* I 'll speak
God's truth. Night after night . . .
*Tresham.* Since when?
*Gerard.* At least
A month — each midnight has some man access
To Lady Mildred's chamber.
*Tresham.* Tush, "access" —
No wide words like "access" to me!
*Gerard.* He runs
Along the woodside, crosses to the South,
Takes the left tree that ends the avenue . . .

*Tresham.* The last great yew-tree ?
*Gerard.* You might stand upon
The main boughs like a platform. Then he . . .
*Tresham.* Quick !
*Gerard.* Climbs up, and, where they lessen at the top,
— I cannot see distinctly, but he throws,
I think — for this I do not vouch — a line
That reaches to the lady's casement —
*Tresham.* — Which
He enters not ! Gerard, some wretched fool
Dares pry into my sister's privacy !
When such are young, it seems a precious thing
To have approached, — to merely have approached,
Got sight of, the abode of her they set
Their frantic thoughts upon. He does not enter ?
Gerard ?
*Gerard.* There is a lamp that 's full i' the midst,
Under a red square in the painted glass
Of Lady Mildred's . . .
*Tresham.* Leave that name out ! Well ?
That lamp ?
*Gerard.* — Is moved at midnight higher up
To one pane — a small dark-blue pane ; he waits
For that among the boughs : at sight of that,
I see him, plain as I see you, my lord,
Open the lady's casement, enter there . . .
*Tresham.* — And stay ?
*Gerard.* An hour, two hours.
*Tresham.* And this you saw
Once ? — twice ? — quick !
*Gerard.* Twenty times.
*Tresham.* And what brings you
Under the yew-trees ?

*Gerard.* The first night I left
My range so far, to track the stranger stag
That broke the pale, I saw the man.
*Tresham.* Yet sent
No cross-bow shaft through the marauder?
*Gerard.* But
He came, my lord, the first time he was seen,
In a great moonlight, light as any day,
*From* Lady Mildred's chamber.
*Tresham* [*after a pause*]. You have no cause
— Who could have cause to do my sister wrong?
*Gerard.* Oh, my lord, only once — let me this once
Speak what is on my mind! Since first I noted
All this, I've groaned as if a fiery net
Plucked me this way and that — fire if I turned
To her, fire if I turned to you, and fire
If down I flung myself and strove to die.
The lady could not have been seven years old
When I was trusted to conduct her safe
Through the deer-herd to stroke the snow-white fawn
I brought to eat bread from her tiny hand
Within a month. She ever had a smile
To greet me with — she . . . if it could undo
What's done, to lop each limb from off this trunk . . .
All that is foolish talk, not fit for you —
I mean, I could not speak and bring her hurt
For Heaven's compelling. But when I was fixed
To hold my peace, each morsel of your food
Eaten beneath your roof, my birth-place too,
Choked me. I wish I had grown mad in doubts
What it behoved me do. This morn it seemed
Either I must confess to you, or die:
Now it is done, I seem the vilest worm
That crawls, to have betrayed my lady.

*Tresham.* No —
No, Gerard!
*Gerard.* Let me go!
*Tresham.* A man, you say:
What man? Young? Not a vulgar hind? What dress?
*Gerard.* A slouched hat and a large dark foreign cloak
Wraps his whole form; even his face is hid;
But I should judge him young: no hind, be sure!
*Tresham.* Why?
*Gerard.* He is ever armed: his sword projects
Beneath the cloak.
*Tresham.* Gerard, — I will not say
No word, no breath of this!
*Gerard.* Thanks, thanks, my lord!
[*Goes.*
*Tresham* [*paces the room. After a pause*]. Oh, thought 's absurd! — as with some monstrous fact
Which, when ill thoughts beset us, seems to give
Merciful God that made the sun and stars,
The waters and the green delights of earth,
The lie! I apprehend the monstrous fact —
Yet know the maker of all worlds is good,
And yield my reason up, inadequate
To reconcile what yet I do behold —
Blasting my sense! There 's cheerful day outside:
This is my library, and this the chair
My father used to sit in carelessly
After his soldier-fashion, while I stood
Between his knees to question him: and here
Gerard our gray retainer, — as he says,
Fed with our food, from sire to son, an age, —
Has told a story — I am to believe!
That Mildred . . . oh, no, no! both tales are true,

Her pure cheek's story and the forester's!
Would she, or could she, err — much less, confound
All guilts of treachery, of craft, of . . . Heaven
Keep me within its hand! — I will sit here
Until thought settle and I see my course.
Avert, oh God, only this woe from me!

[*As he sinks his head between his arms on the table,* GUENDOLEN's *voice is heard at the door.*

Lord Tresham! [*She knocks.*] Is Lord Tresham there?

[TRESHAM, *hastily turning, pulls down the first book above him and opens it.*

*Tresham.* Come in! [*She enters.*] Ha, Guendolen! — good morning.

*Guendolen.* Nothing more?

*Tresham.* What should I say more?

*Guendolen.* Pleasant question! more?
This more. Did I besiege poor Mildred's brain
Last night till close on morning with "the Earl,"
"The Earl" — whose worth did I asseverate
Till I am very fain to hope that . . . Thorold,
What is all this? You are not well!

*Tresham.* Who, I?
You laugh at me.

*Guendolen.* Has what I 'm fain to hope,
Arrived then? Does that huge tome show some blot
In the Earl's 'scutcheon come no longer back
Than Arthur's time?

*Tresham.* When left you Mildred's chamber?

*Guendolen.* Oh, late enough, I told you! The main thing
To ask is, how I left her chamber, — sure,
Content yourself, she 'll grant this paragon
Of Earls no such ungracious . . .

*Tresham.* Send her here!
*Guendolen.* Thorold?
*Tresham.* I mean — acquaint her, Guendolen,
— But mildly!
*Guendolen.* Mildly?
*Tresham.* Ah, you guessed aright!
I am not well: there is no hiding it.
But tell her I would see her at her leisure —
That is, at once! here in the library!
The passage in that old Italian book
We hunted for so long is found, say, found —
And if I let it slip again . . . you see,
That she must come — and instantly!
*Guendolen.* I 'll die
Piecemeal, record that, if there have not gloomed
Some blot i' the 'scutcheon!
*Tresham.* Go! or, Guendolen,
Be you at call, — with Austin, if you choose, —
In the adjoining gallery! There, go!
[GUENDOLEN *goes.*
Another lesson to me! You might bid
A child disguise his heart's sore, and conduct
Some sly investigation point by point
With a smooth brow, as well as bid me catch
The inquisitorial cleverness some praise.
If you had told me yesterday, "There 's one
You needs must circumvent and practise with,
Entrap by policies, if you would worm
The truth out: and that one is — Mildred!" There,
There — reasoning is thrown away on it!
Prove she 's unchaste . . . why, you may after prove
That she 's a poisoner, traitress, what you will!
Where I can comprehend naught, naught 's to say.
Or do, or think. Force on me but the first

Abomination, — then outpour all plagues,
And I shall ne'er make count of them.

*Enter* MILDRED.

*Mildred.* What book
Is it I wanted, Thorold? Guendolen
Thought you were pale; you are not pale. That book?
That 's Latin surely.
*Tresham.* Mildred, here 's a line,
(Don't lean on me: I 'll English it for you)
"Love conquers all things." What love conquers them?
What love should you esteem — best love?
*Mildred.* True love.
*Tresham.* I mean, and should have said, whose love is best
Of all that love or that profess to love?
*Mildred.* The list 's so long: there 's father's, mother's, husband's . . .
*Tresham.* Mildred, I do believe a brother's love
For a sole sister must exceed them all.
For see now, only see! there 's no alloy
Of earth that creeps into the perfect'st gold
Of other loves — no gratitude to claim;
You never gave her life, not even aught
That keeps life — never tended her, instructed,
Enriched her — so, your love can claim no right
O'er her save pure love's claim: that 's what I call
Freedom from earthliness. You 'll never hope
To be such friends, for instance, she and you,
As when you hunted cowslips in the woods
Or played together in the meadow hay.
Oh yes — with age, respect comes, and your worth
Is felt, there 's growing sympathy of tastes,

There 's ripened friendship, there 's confirmed esteem :
— Much head these make against the new-comer !
The startling apparition, the strange youth —
Whom one half-hour's conversing with, or, say,
Mere gazing at, shall change (beyond all change
This Ovid ever sang about) your soul
. . . Her soul, that is, — the sister's soul ! With her
'T was winter yesterday ; now, all is warmth,
The green leaf 's springing and the turtle's voice,
" Arise and come away ! " Come whither ? — far
Enough from the esteem, respect, and all
The brother's somewhat insignificant
Array of rights ! All which he knows before,
Has calculated on so long ago !
I think such love, (apart from yours and mine,)
Contented with its little term of life,
Intending to retire betimes, aware
How soon the background must be place for it,
— I think, am sure, a brother's love exceeds
All the world's love in its unworldliness.

*Mildred.* What is this for ?

*Tresham.* This, Mildred, is it for !
Or, no, I cannot go to it so soon !
That 's one of many points my haste left out —
Each day, each hour throws forth its silk-slight film
Between the being tied to you by birth,
And you, until those slender threads compose
A web that shrouds her daily life of hopes
And fears and fancies, all her life, from yours :
So close you live and yet so far apart !
And must I rend this web, tear up, break down
The sweet and palpitating mystery
That makes her sacred ? You — for you I mean,
Shall I speak, shall I not speak ?

*Mildred.* Speak!
*Tresham.* I will.
Is there a story men could — any man
Could tell of you, you would conceal from me?
I 'll never think there 's falsehood on that lip.
Say "There is no such story men could tell,"
And I 'll believe you, though I disbelieve
The world — the world of better men than I,
And women such as I suppose you. Speak!
[*After a pause.*] Not speak? Explain then! Clear it up then! Move
Some of the miserable weight away
That presses lower than the grave! Not speak?
Some of the dead weight, Mildred! Ah, if I
Could bring myself to plainly make their charge
Against you! Must I, Mildred? Silent still?
[*After a pause.*] Is there a gallant that has night by night
Admittance to your chamber?
[*After a pause.*] Then, his name!
Till now, I only had a thought for you:
But now, — his name!
*Mildred.* Thorold, do you devise
Fit expiation for my guilt, if fit
There be! 'T is naught to say that I 'll endure
And bless you, — that my spirit yearns to purge
Her stains off in the fierce renewing fire:
But do not plunge me into other guilt!
Oh, guilt enough! I cannot tell his name.
*Tresham.* Then judge yourself! How should I act? Pronounce!
*Mildred.* Oh, Thorold, you must never tempt me thus!
To die here in this chamber by that sword

Would seem like punishment: so should I glide,
Like an arch-cheat, into extremest bliss!
'T were easily arranged for me: but you —
What would become of you?
*Tresham.* And what will now
Become of me? I 'll hide your shame and mine
From every eye; the dead must heave their hearts
Under the marble of our chapel-floor;
They cannot rise and blast you. You may wed
Your paramour above our mother's tomb;
Our mother cannot move from 'neath your foot.
We too will somehow wear this one day out:
But with to-morrow hastens here — the Earl!
The youth without suspicion face can come
From Heaven, and heart from . . . whence proceed such hearts?
I have despatched last night at your command
A missive bidding him present himself
To-morrow — here — thus much is said; the rest
Is understood as if 't were written down —
"His suit finds favor in your eyes." Now dictate
This morning's letter that shall countermand
Last night's — do dictate that!
*Mildred.* But, Thorold — if
I will receive him as I said?
*Tresham.* The Earl?
*Mildred.* I will receive him.
*Tresham* [*starting up*]. Ho there! Guendolen!

GUENDOLEN *and* AUSTIN *enter.*

And, Austin, you are welcome, too! Look there!
The woman there!
*Austin and Guendolen.* How? Mildred?
*Tresham.* Mildred once!

Now the receiver night by night, when sleep
Blesses the inmates of her father's house,
— I say, the soft sly wanton that receives
Her guilt's accomplice 'neath this roof which holds
You, Guendolen, you, Austin, and has held
A thousand Treshams — never one like her !
No lighter of the signal-lamp her quick
Foul breath near quenches in hot eagerness
To mix with breath as foul ! no loosener
O' the lattice, practised in the stealthy tread,
The low voice and the noiseless come-and-go !
Not one composer of the bacchant's mien
Into — what you thought Mildred's, in a word !
Know her !

*Guendolen.* Oh, Mildred, look to me, at least !
Thorold — she 's dead, I 'd say, but that she stands
Rigid as stone and whiter !

*Tresham.* You have heard . . .

*Guendolen.* Too much ! You must proceed no further.

*Mildred.* Yes —
Proceed ! All 's truth. Go from me !

*Tresham.* All is truth,
She tells you ! Well, you know, or ought to know,
All this I would forgive in her. I 'd con
Each precept the harsh world enjoins, I 'd take
Our ancestors' stern verdicts one by one,
I 'd bind myself before them to exact
The prescribed vengeance — and one word of hers,
The sight of her, the bare least memory
Of Mildred, my one sister, my heart's pride
Above all prides, my all in all so long,
Would scatter every trace of my resolve.
What were it silently to waste away

And see her waste away from this day forth,
Two scathed things with leisure to repent,
And grow acquainted with the grave, and die
Tired out if not at peace, and be forgotten?
It were not so impossible to bear.
But this — that, fresh from last night's pledge renewed
Of love with the successful gallant there,
She calmly bids me help her to entice,
Inveigle an unconscious trusting youth
Who thinks her all that's chaste and good and pure,
— Invites me to betray him . . . who so fit
As honor's self to cover shame's arch-deed?
— That she'll receive Lord Mertoun — (her own phrase) —
This, who could bear? Why, you have heard of thieves,
Stabbers, the earth's disgrace, who yet have laughed,
"Talk not to me of torture — I'll betray
No comrade I've pledged faith to!" — you have heard
Of wretched women — all but Mildreds — tied
By wild illicit ties to losels vile
You'd tempt them to forsake; and they'll reply
"Gold, friends, repute, I left for him, I find
In him, why should I leave him then for gold,
Repute or friends?" — and you have felt your heart
Respond to such poor outcasts of the world
As to so many friends; bad as you please,
You've felt they were God's men and women still,
So, not to be disowned by you. But she
That stands there, calmly gives her lover up
As means to wed the Earl that she may hide
Their intercourse the surelier: and, for this,
I curse her to her face before you all.
Shame hunt her from the earth! Then Heaven do right

To both! It hears me now — shall judge her then!
[*As* MILDRED *faints and falls*, TRESHAM *rushes out.*
*Austin.* Stay, Tresham, we 'll accompany you!
*Guendolen.* We?
What, and leave Mildred? We? Why, where 's my place
But by her side, and where yours but by mine? 330
Mildred — one word! Only look at me, then!
*Austin.* No, Guendolen! I echo Thorold's voice.
She is unworthy to behold . . .
*Guendolen.* Us two?
If you spoke on reflection, and if I
Approved your speech — if you (to put the thing
At lowest) you the soldier, bound to make
The king's cause yours and fight for it, and throw
Regard to others of its right or wrong,
— If with a death-white woman you can help,
Let alone sister, let alone a Mildred, 340
You left her — or if I, her cousin, friend
This morning, playfellow but yesterday,
Who said, or thought at least a thousand times,
"I 'd serve you if I could," should now face round
And say, "Ah, that 's to only signify
I 'd serve you while you 're fit to serve yourself:
So long as fifty eyes await the turn
Of yours to forestall its yet half-formed wish,
I 'll proffer my assistance you 'll not need —
When every tongue is praising you, I 'll join 350
The praisers' chorus — when you 're hemmed about
With lives between you and detraction — lives
To be laid down if a rude voice, rash eye,
Rough hand should violate the sacred ring
Their worship throws about you, — then indeed,
Who 'll stand up for you stout as I?" If so

We said, and so we did, — not Mildred there
Would be unworthy to behold us both,
But we should be unworthy, both of us,
To be beheld by — by — your meanest dog,
Which, if that sword were broken in your face
Before a crowd, that badge torn off your breast,
And you cast out with hooting and contempt,
— Would push his way thro' all the hooters, gain
Your side, go off with you and all your shame
To the next ditch you choose to die in! Austin,
Do you love me? Here 's Austin, Mildred, — here 's
Your brother says he does not believe half —
No, nor half that — of all he heard! He says,
Look up and take his hand!

*Austin.* Look up and take
My hand, dear Mildred!

*Mildred.* I — I was so young!
Beside, I loved him, Thorold — and I had
No mother; God forgot me: so, I fell.

*Guendolen.* Mildred!

*Mildred.* Require no further! Did I dream
That I could palliate what is done? All 's true.
Now, punish me! A woman takes my hand?
Let go my hand! You do not know, I see.
I thought that Thorold told you.

*Guendolen.* What is this?
Where start you to?

*Mildred.* Oh, Austin, loosen me!
You heard the whole of it — your eyes were worse,
In their surprise, than Thorold's! Oh, unless
You stay to execute his sentence, loose
My hand! Has Thorold gone, and are you here?

*Guendolen.* Here, Mildred, we two friends of yours will wait

Your bidding; be you silent, sleep or muse!
Only, when you shall want your bidding done,
How can we do it if we are not by?
Here 's Austin waiting patiently your will!
One spirit to command, and one to love
And to believe in it and do its best,
Poor as that is, to help it — why, the world
Has been won many a time, its length and breadth,
By just such a beginning!

*Mildred.* I believe
If once I threw my arms about your neck
And sunk my head upon your breast, that I
Should weep again.

*Guendolen.* Let go her hand now, Austin!
Wait for me. Pace the gallery and think
On the world's seemings and realities,
Until I call you. [AUSTIN *goes.*

*Mildred.* No — I cannot weep.
No more tears from this brain — no sleep — no tears!
O Guendolen, I love you!

*Guendolen.* Yes: and "love"
Is a short word that says so very much!
It says that you confide in me.

*Mildred.* Confide!

*Guendolen.* Your lover's name, then! I've so much to learn,
Ere I can work in your behalf!

*Mildred.* My friend,
You know I cannot tell his name.

*Guendolen.* At least
He is your lover? and you love him too?

*Mildred.* Ah, do you ask me that? — but I am fallen
So low!

*Guendolen.* You love him still, then?

*Mildred.* My sole prop
Against the guilt that crushes me! I say,
Each night ere I lie down, "I was so young —
I had no mother, and I loved him so!"
And then God seems indulgent, and I dare
Trust him my soul in sleep.
*Guendolen.* How could you let us
E'en talk to you about Lord Mertoun then?
*Mildred.* There is a cloud around me.
*Guendolen.* But you said
You would receive his suit in spite of this?
*Mildred.* I say there is a cloud . . .
*Guendolen.* No cloud to me!
Lord Mertoun and your lover are the same!
*Mildred.* What maddest fancy . . .
*Guendolen* [*calling aloud*]. Austin! (spare your pains —
When I have got a truth, that truth I keep) —
*Mildred.* By all you love, sweet Guendolen, forbear!
Have I confided in you . . .
*Guendolen.* Just for this!
Austin! — Oh, not to guess it at the first!
But I did guess it — that is, I divined,
Felt by an instinct how it was: why else
Should I pronounce you free from all that heap
Of sins which had been irredeemable?
I felt they were not yours — what other way
Than this, not yours? The secret 's wholly mine!
*Mildred.* If you would see me die before his face . . .
*Guendolen.* I 'd hold my peace! And if the Earl returns
To-night?
*Mildred.* Ah Heaven, he 's lost!
*Guendolen.* I thought so. Austin!

*Enter* AUSTIN.

Oh, where have you been hiding?
*Austin.* Thorold's gone,
I know not how, across the meadow-land.
I watched him till I lost him in the skirts
O' the beech-wood.
*Guendolen.* Gone? All thwarts us.
*Mildred.* Thorold too?
*Guendolen.* I have thought. First lead this Mildred to her room.
Go on the other side; and then we'll seek
Your brother: and I'll tell you, by the way,
The greatest comfort in the world. You said
There was a clue to all. Remember, Sweet,
He said there was a clue! I hold it. Come!

## ACT III.

SCENE I. — *The end of the Yew-tree Avenue under* MILDRED'S *window. A light seen through a central red pane.*

*Enter* TRESHAM *through the trees.*

Again here! But I cannot lose myself.
The heath — the orchard — I have traversed glades
And dells and bosky paths which used to lead
Into green wild-wood depths, bewildering
My boy's adventurous step. And now they tend
Hither or soon or late; the blackest shade
Breaks up, the thronged trunks of the trees ope wide,
And the dim turret I have fled from, fronts
Again my step; the very river put

Its arm about me and conducted me
To this detested spot. Why then, I 'll shun
Their will no longer: do your will with me!
Oh, bitter! To have reared a towering scheme
Of happiness, and to behold it razed,
Were nothing: all men hope, and see their hopes
Frustrate, and grieve awhile, and hope anew.
But I . . . to hope that from a line like ours
No horrid prodigy like this would spring,
Were just as though I hoped that from these old
Confederates against the sovereign day,
Children of older and yet older sires,
Whose living coral berries dropped, as now
On me, on many a baron's surcoat once,
On many a beauty's wimple — would proceed
No poison-tree, to thrust, from hell its root,
Hither and thither its strange snaky arms.
Why came I here? What must I do? [*A bell strikes.*] A bell?
Midnight! and 'tis at midnight . . . Ah, I catch
— Woods, river, plains, I catch your meaning now,
And I obey you! Hist! This tree will serve.
[*He retires behind one of the trees. After a pause, enter* MERTOUN *cloaked as before.*
*Mertoun.* Not time! Beat out thy last voluptuous beat
Of hope and fear, my heart! I thought the clock
I' the chapel struck as I was pushing through
The ferns. And so I shall no more see rise
My love-star! Oh, no matter for the past!
So much the more delicious task to watch
Mildred revive: to pluck out, thorn by thorn,
All traces of the rough forbidden path
My rash love lured her to! Each day must see
Some fear of hers effaced, some hope renewed:

Then there will be surprises, unforeseen
Delights in store. I 'll not regret the past.
[*The light is placed above in the purple pane*
And see, my signal rises, Mildred's star!
I never saw it lovelier than now
It rises for the last time. If it sets,
'T is that the re-assuring sun may dawn.
[*As he prepares to ascend the last tree of th*
*avenue,* TRESHAM *arrests his arm.*
Unhand me — peasant, by your grasp! Here 's gold
'T was a mad freak of mine. I said I 'd pluck
A branch from the white-blossomed shrub beneath
The casement there. Take this, and hold you
peace.
*Tresham.* Into the moonlight yonder, come with me
Out of the shadow!
*Mertoun.* I am armed, fool!
*Tresham.* Yes,
Or no? You 'll come into the light, or no?
My hand is on your throat — refuse! —
*Mertoun.* That voice
Where have I heard . . . no — that was mild and slow
I 'll come with you. [*They advance*
*Tresham.* You 're armed: that 's well. Declar
Your name: who are you?
*Mertoun.* (Tresham! — she is lost!
*Tresham.* Oh, silent? Do you know, you bea
yourself
Exactly as, in curious dreams I 've had
How felons, this wild earth is full of, look
When they 're detected, still your kind has looked!
The bravo holds an assured countenance,
The thief is voluble and plausible,
But silently the slave of lust has crouched

When I have fancied it before a man.
Your name!
*Mertoun.* I do conjure Lord Tresham — ay,
Kissing his foot, if so I might prevail —
That he for his own sake forbear to ask
My name! As heaven 's above, his future weal
Or woe depends upon my silence! Vain!
I read your white inexorable face.
Know me, Lord Tresham!
[*He throws off his disguises.*
*Tresham.* Mertoun!
[*After a pause.*] Draw now!
*Mertoun.* Hear me
But speak first!
*Tresham.* Not one least word on your life!
Be sure that I will strangle in your throat
The least word that informs me how you live
And yet seem what you seem! No doubt 't was you
Taught Mildred still to keep that face and sin.
We should join hands in frantic sympathy
If you once taught me the unteachable,
Explained how you can live so, and so lie.
With God's help I retain, despite my sense,
The old belief — a life like yours is still
Impossible. Now draw!
*Mertoun.* Not for my sake,
Do I entreat a hearing — for your sake,
And most, for her sake!
*Tresham.* Ha ha, what should I
Know of your ways? A miscreant like yourself,
How must one rouse his ire? A blow? — that 's pride
No doubt, to him! One spurns him, does one not?
Or sets the foot upon his mouth, or spits
Into his face! Come! Which, or all of these?

*Mertoun.* 'Twixt him and me and Mildred,
Heaven be judge!
Can I avoid this? Have your will, my lord!
[*He draws and, after a few passes, falls.*
*Tresham.* You are not hurt?
*Mertoun.* You 'll hear me now!
*Tresham.* But rise!
*Mertoun.* Ah, Tresham, say I not "you 'll hear me now!"
And what procures a man the right to speak
In his defence before his fellow man,
But — I suppose — the thought that presently
He may have leave to speak before his God
His whole defence?
*Tresham.* Not hurt? It cannot be!
You made no effort to resist me. Where
Did my sword reach you? Why not have returned
My thrusts? Hurt where?
*Mertoun.* My lord —
*Tresham.* How young he is!
*Mertoun.* Lord Tresham, I am very young, and yet
I have entangled other lives with mine.
Do let me speak, and do believe my speech!
That when I die before you presently, —
*Tresham.* Can you stay here till I return with help?
*Mertoun.* Oh, stay by me! When I was less than boy
I did you grievous wrong and knew it not —
Upon my honor, knew it not! Once known,
I could not find what seemed a better way
To right you than I took: my life — you feel
How less than nothing were the giving you
The life you 've taken! But I thought my way
The better — only for your sake and hers:

And as you have decided otherwise,
Would I had an infinity of lives
To offer you! Now say — instruct me — think!
Can you, from the brief minutes I have left,
Eke out my reparation? Oh think — think!
For I must wring a partial — dare I say,
Forgiveness from you, ere I die?
*Tresham.* I do
Forgive you.
*Mertoun.* Wait and ponder that great word!
Because, if you forgive me, I shall hope
To speak to you of — Mildred!
*Tresham.* Mertoun, haste
And anger have undone us. 'T is not you
Should tell me for a novelty you 're young,
Thoughtless, unable to recall the past.
Be but your pardon ample as my own!
*Mertoun.* Ah, Tresham, that a sword-stroke and a drop
Of blood or two, should bring all this about!
Why, 't was my very fear of you, my love
Of you — (what passion like a boy's for one
Like you?) — that ruined me! I dreamed of you —
You, all accomplished, courted everywhere,
The scholar and the gentleman. I burned
To knit myself to you: but I was young,
And your surpassing reputation kept me
So far aloof! Oh, wherefore all that love?
With less of love, my glorious yesterday
Of praise and gentlest words and kindest looks,
Had taken place perchance six months ago.
Even now, how happy we had been! And yet
I know the thought of this escaped you, Tresham!
Let me look up into your face; I feel

'T is changed above me: yet my eyes are glazed.
Where? where?
[*As he endeavors to raise himself, his eye catches the lamp.*
Ah, Mildred! What will Mildred do?
Tresham, her life is bound up in the life
That 's bleeding fast away! I 'll live — must live,
There, if you 'll only turn me I shall live
And save her! Tresham — oh, had you but heard!
Had you but heard! What right was yours to set
The thoughtless foot upon her life and mine,
And then say, as we perish, "Had I thought,
All had gone otherwise"? We 've sinned and die:
Never you sin, Lord Tresham! for you 'll die,
And God will judge you.
*Tresham.* Yes, be satisfied!
That process is begun.
*Mertoun.* And she sits there
Waiting for me! Now, say you this to her —
You, not another — say, I saw him die
As he breathed this, "I love her" — you don't know
What those three small words mean! Say, loving her
Lowers me down the bloody slope to death
With memories . . . I speak to her, not you,
Who had no pity, will have no remorse,
Perchance intend her . . . Die along with me,
Dear Mildred! 't is so easy, and you 'll 'scape
So much unkindness! Can I lie at rest,
With rude speech spoken to you, ruder deeds
Done to you? — heartless men shall have my heart,
And I tied down with grave-clothes and the worm,
Aware, perhaps, of every blow — oh God! —
Upon those lips — yet of no power to tear
The felon stripe by stripe! Die, Mildred! Leave

Their honorable world to them! For God
We 're good enough, though the world casts us out.
[*A whistle is heard.*
*Tresham.* Ho, Gerard!

*Enter* GERARD, AUSTIN *and* GUENDOLEN, *with lights.*

No one speak! You see what 's done.
I cannot bear another voice.
*Mertoun.* There 's light —
Light all about me, and I move to it.
Tresham, did I not tell you — did you not
Just promise to deliver words of mine
To Mildred?
*Tresham.* I will bear those words to her.
*Mertoun.* Now?
*Tresham.* Now. Lift you the body, and leave me
The head.
[*As they have half raised* MERTOUN, *he turns suddenly.*
*Mertoun.* I knew they turned me: turn me not from her!
There! stay you! there! [*Dies.*
*Guendolen* [*after a pause*]. Austin, remain you here
With Thorold until Gerard comes with help:
Then lead him to his chamber. I must go
To Mildred.
*Tresham.* Guendolen, I hear each word
You utter. Did you hear him bid me give
His message? Did you hear my promise? I,
And only I, see Mildred.
*Guendolen.* She will die.
*Tresham.* Oh no, she will not die! I dare not hope
She 'll die. What ground have you to think she 'll die?
Why, Austin 's with you!

*Austin.* Had we but arrived
Before you fought!
*Tresham.* There was no fight at all.
He let me slaughter him — the boy! I 'll trust
The body there to you and Gerard — thus!
Now bear him on before me.
*Austin.* Whither bear him?
*Tresham.* Oh, to my chamber! When we meet there next,
We shall be friends.
[*They bear out the body of* MERTOUN.
Will she die, Guendolen? 200
*Guendolen.* Where are you taking me?
*Tresham.* He fell just here.
Now answer me. Shall you in your whole life
— You who have naught to do with Mertoun's fate,
Now you have seen his breast upon the turf,
Shall you e'er walk this way if you can help?
When you and Austin wander arm-in-arm
Through our ancestral grounds, will not a shade
Be ever on the meadow and the waste —
Another kind of shade than when the night
Shuts the woodside with all its whispers up? 210
But will you ever so forget his breast
As carelessly to cross this bloody turf
Under the black yew avenue? That 's well!
You turn your head: and I then? —
*Guendolen.* What is done
Is done. My care is for the living. Thorold,
Bear up against this burden: more remains
To set the neck to!
*Tresham.* Dear and ancient trees
My fathers planted, and I loved so well!

What have I done that, like some fabled crime
Of yore, lets loose a Fury leading thus
Her miserable dance amidst you all?
Oh, never more for me shall winds intone
With all your tops a vast antiphony,
Demanding and responding in God's praise!
Hers ye are now, not mine! Farewell — farewell!

SCENE II. — MILDRED'S *chamber*.

MILDRED *alone*.

He comes not! I have heard of those who seemed
Resourceless in prosperity, — you thought
Sorrow might slay them when she listed; yet
Did they so gather up their diffused strength
At her first menace, that they bade her strike,
And stood and laughed her subtlest skill to scorn.
Oh, 't is not so with me! The first woe fell,
And the rest fall upon it, not on me:
Else should I bear that Henry comes not? — fails
Just this first night out of so many nights?
Loving is done with. Were he sitting now,
As so few hours since, on that seat, we'd love
No more — contrive no thousand happy ways
To hide love from the loveless, any more.
I think I might have urged some little point
In my defence, to Thorold; he was breathless
For the least hint of a defence: but no,
The first shame over, all that would might fall.
No Henry! Yet I merely sit and think
The morn's deed o'er and o'er. I must have crept
Out of myself. A Mildred that has lost
Her lover — oh, I dare not look upon
Such woe! I crouch away from it! 'T is she,

Mildred, will break her heart, not I! The world
Forsakes me: only Henry 's left me — left?
When I have lost him, for he does not come,
And I sit stupidly . . . Oh Heaven, break up
This worse than anguish, this mad apathy,
By any means or any messenger!
*Tresham* [*without*]. Mildred!
*Mildred.* Come in! Heaven hears me!
[*Enter* TRESHAM.] You? alone?
Oh, no more cursing!
*Tresham.* Mildred, I must sit.
There — you sit!
*Mildred.* Say it, Thorold — do not look
The curse! deliver all you come to say!
What must become of me? Oh, speak that thought
Which makes your brow and cheeks so pale!
*Tresham.* My thought?
*Mildred.* All of it!
*Tresham.* How we waded — years ago —
After those water-lilies, till the plash,
I know not how, surprised us; and you dared
Neither advance nor turn back: so, we stood
Laughing and crying until Gerard came —
Once safe upon the turf, the loudest too,
For once more reaching the relinquished prize!
How idle thoughts are, some men's, dying men's!
Mildred, —
*Mildred.* You call me kindlier by my name
Than even yesterday: what is in that?
*Tresham.* It weighs so much upon my mind that I
This morning took an office not my own!
I might . . . of course, I must be glad or grieved,
Content or not, at every little thing
That touches you. I may with a wrung heart

Even reprove you, Mildred; I did more:
Will you forgive me?
*Mildred.* Thorold? do you mock?
Or no . . . and yet you bid me . . . say that word!
*Tresham.* Forgive me, Mildred! — are you silent, Sweet?
*Mildred* [*starting up*]. Why does not Henry Mertoun come to-night?
Are you, too, silent?
[*Dashing his mantle aside, and pointing to his scabbard, which is empty.*
Ah, this speaks for you!
You 've murdered Henry Mertoun! Now proceed!
What is it I must pardon? This and all?
Well, I do pardon you — I think I do.
Thorold, how very wretched you must be!
*Tresham.* He bade me tell you . . .
*Mildred.* What I do forbid
Your utterance of! So much that you may tell
And will not — how you murdered him . . . but, no!
You 'll tell me that he loved me, never more
Than bleeding out his life there: must I say
"Indeed," to that? Enough! I pardon you.
*Tresham.* You cannot, Mildred! for the harsh words, yes:
Of this last deed Another's judge: whose doom
I wait in doubt, despondency and fear.
*Mildred.* Oh, true! There 's naught for me to pardon! True!
You loose my soul of all its cares at once.
Death makes me sure of him forever! You
Tell me his last words? He shall tell me them,
And take my answer — not in words, but reading

Himself the heart I had to read him late,
Which death . . .
*Tresham.* Death? You are dying too? Well said
Of Guendolen! I dared not hope you 'd die:
But she was sure of it.
*Mildred.* Tell Guendolen
I loved her, and tell Austin . . .
*Tresham.* Him you loved:
And me?
*Mildred.* Ah, Thorold! Was 't not rashly done
To quench that blood, on fire with youth and hope
And love of me — whom you loved too, and yet
Suffered to sit here waiting his approach
While you were slaying him? Oh, doubtlessly
You let him speak his poor confused boy's-speech
— Do his poor utmost to disarm your wrath
And respite me! — you let him try to give
The story of our love and ignorance,
And the brief madness and the long despair —
You let him plead all this, because your code
Of honor bids you hear before you strike:
But at the end, as he looked up for life
Into your eyes — you struck him down!
*Tresham.* No! No!
Had I but heard him — had I let him speak
Half the truth — less — had I looked long on him
I had desisted! Why, as he lay there,
The moon on his flushed cheek, I gathered all
The story ere he told it: I saw through
The troubled surface of his crime and yours
A depth of purity immovable,
Had I but glanced, where all seemed turbidest
Had gleamed some inlet to the calm beneath;
I would not glance: my punishment 's at hand.

There, Mildred, is the truth! and you — say on —
You curse me?

*Mildred.* As I dare approach that Heaven
Which has not bade a living thing despair,
Which needs no code to keep its grace from stain,
But bids the vilest worm that turns on it
Desist and be forgiven, — I — forgive not,
But bless you, Thorold, from my soul of souls!

[*Falls on his neck.*

There! Do not think too much upon the past!
The cloud that 's broke was all the same a cloud
While it stood up between my friend and you;
You hurt him 'neath its shadow: but is that
So past retrieve? I have his heart, you know;
I may dispose of it: I give it you!
It loves you as mine loves! Confirm me, Henry!

[*Dies.*

*Tresham.* I wish thee joy, Beloved! I am glad
In thy full gladness!

*Guendolen* [*without*]. Mildred! Tresham!

[*Entering with* Austin.] Thorold,
I could desist no longer. Ah, she swoons!
That 's well.

*Tresham.* Oh, better far than that!

*Guendolen.* She 's dead!
Let me unlock her arms!

*Tresham.* She threw them thus
About my neck, and blessed me, and then died:
You 'll let them stay now, Guendolen!

*Austin.* Leave her
And look to him! What ails you, Thorold?

*Guendolen.* White
As she, and whiter! Austin! quick — this side!

*Austin.* A froth is oozing through his clenched teeth;
Both lips, where they're not bitten through, are black:
Speak, dearest Thorold!
*Tresham.* Something does weigh down
My neck beside her weight: thanks: I should fall
But for you, Austin, I believe! — there, there,
'T will pass away soon! — ah, — I had forgotten:
I am dying.
*Guendolen.* Thorold — Thorold — why was this?
*Tresham.* I said, just as I drank the poison off,
The earth would be no longer earth to me,
The life out of all life was gone from me.
There are blind ways provided, the foredone
Heart-weary player in this pageant-world
Drops out by, letting the main masque defile
By the conspicuous portal: I am through —
Just through!
*Guendolen.* Don't leave him, Austin! Death is close.
*Tresham.* Already Mildred's face is peacefuller.
I see you, Austin — feel you: here's my hand,
Put yours in it — you, Guendolen, yours too!
You're lord and lady now — you're Treshams; name
And fame are yours: you hold our 'scutcheon up.
Austin, no blot on it! You see how blood
Must wash one blot away: the first blot came
And the first blood came. To the vain world's eye
All 's gules again: no care to the vain world,
From whence the red was drawn!
*Austin.* No blot shall come!

*Tresham.* I said that: yet it did come. Should it come,
Vengeance is God's, not man's. Remember me!
[*Dies.*

*Guendolen* [*letting fall the pulseless arm*]. Ah, Thorold, we can but — remember you!

# COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY;

## A PLAY.

1844.

NO ONE LOVES AND HONORS BARRY CORNWALL MORE THAN DOES ROBERT BROWNING;
WHO, HAVING NOTHING BETTER THAN THIS PLAY TO GIVE HIM IN PROOF OF IT, MUST SAY SO.
LONDON: 1844.

Ivy and violet, what do ye here
With blossom and shoot in the warm spring-weather,
Hiding the arms of Monchenci and Vere?

— *Hanmer.*

*PERSONS.*

COLOMBE OF RAVESTEIN, Duchess of Juliers and Cleves.
SABYNE, ADOLF, *her attendants.*
GUIBERT, GAUCELME, MAUFROY, CLUGNET, *courtiers.*
VALENCE, *advocate of Cleves.*
PRINCE BERTHOLD, *claimant of the Duchy.*
MELCHIOR, *his confidant.*

PLACE. — *The Palace at Juliers.*

TIME, 16—.

## ACT I.

MORNING.

SCENE. — *A corridor leading to the Audience-chamber.*

GAUCELME, CLUGNET, MAUFROY *and other* Courtiers, *round* GUIBERT, *who is silently reading a paper: as he drops it at the end* —

*Guibert.* That this should be her birthday; and the day
We all invested her, twelve months ago,
As the late Duke's true heiress and our liege;
And that this also must become the day . . .
Oh, miserable lady!
*1st Courtier.* Ay, indeed?
*2nd Courtier.* Well, Guibert?
*3rd Courtier.* But your news, my friend, your news!
The sooner, friend, one learns Prince Berthold's pleasure,
The better for us all: how writes the Prince?
Give me! I'll read it for the common good.
*Guibert.* In time, sir, — but till time comes, pardon me!
Our old Duke just disclosed his child's retreat,
Declared her true succession to his rule,
And died: this birthday was the day, last year,
We convoyed her from Castle Ravestein —
That sleeps out trustfully its extreme age
On the Meuse' quiet bank, where she lived queen
Over the water-buds, — to Juliers' court
With joy and bustle. Here again we stand;
Sir Gaucelme's buckle 's constant to his cap:
To-day 's much such another sunny day!
*Gaucelme.* Come, Guibert, this outgrows a jest, I think!
You 're hardly such a novice as to need
The lesson, you pretend.
*Guibert.* What lesson, sir?
That everybody, if he 'd thrive at court,
Should, first and last of all, look to himself?
Why, no: and therefore with your good example,
(— Ho, Master Adolf!) — to myself I 'll look.

*Enter* ADOLF.

*Guibert.* The Prince's letter; why, of all men else,
Comes it to me?
*Adolf.* By virtue of your place,
Sir Guibert! 'T was the Prince's express charge,
His envoy told us, that the missive there
Should only reach our lady by the hand
Of whosoever held your place.
*Guibert.* Enough!
[ADOLF *retires.*
Then, gentles, who 'll accept a certain poor
Indifferently honorable place,
My friends, I make no doubt, have gnashed their teeth
At leisure minutes these half-dozen years,
To find me never in the mood to quit?
Who asks may have it, with my blessing, and —
This to present our lady. Who 'll accept?
You, — you, — you? There it lies, and may, for me!
*Maufroy* [*a youth, picking up the paper, reads aloud*]. "Prince Berthold, proved by titles following
Undoubted Lord of Juliers, comes this day
To claim his own, with license from the Pope,
The Emperor, the Kings of Spain and France" . . .
*Gaucelme.* Sufficient "titles following," I judge!
Don't read another! Well, — "to claim his own"?
*Maufroy.* "— And take possession of the Duchy held
Since twelve months, to the true heir's prejudice,
By" . . . Colombe, Juliers' mistress, so she thinks,
And Ravestein's mere lady, as we find.
Who wants the place and paper? Guibert 's right.
I hope to climb a little in the world, —

I 'd push my fortunes, — but, no more than he,
Could tell her on this happy day of days,
That, save the nosegay in her hand, perhaps,
There 's nothing left to call her own. Sir Clugnet,
You famish for promotion ; what say you ?
*Clugnet* [*an old man*]. To give this letter were a sort, I take it,
Of service : services ask recompense :
What kind of corner may be Ravestein ?
*Guibert*. The castle ? Oh, you 'd share her fortunes ? Good !
Three walls stand upright, full as good as four,
With no such bad remainder of a roof.
*Clugnet*. Oh, — but the town ?
*Guibert*. Five houses, fifteen huts ;
A church whereto was once a spire, 't is judged ;
And half a dyke, except in time of thaw.
*Clugnet*. Still, there 's some revenue ?
*Guibert*. Else Heaven forfend !
You hang a beacon out, should fogs increase ;
So, when the Autumn floats of pine-wood steer
Safe 'mid the white confusion, thanks to you,
Their grateful raftsman flings a guilder in ;
— That 's if he mean to pass your way next time.
*Clugnet*. If not ?
*Guibert*. Hang guilders, then ! He blesses you.
*Clugnet*. What man do you suppose me ? Keep your paper !
And, let me say, it shows no handsome spirit
To dally with misfortune : keep your place !
*Gaucelme*. Some one must tell her.
*Guibert*. Some one may : you may !
*Gaucelme*. Sir Guibert, 't is no trifle turns me sick
Of court-hypocrisy at years like mine,

But this goes near it. Where 's there news at all?
Who 'll have the face, for instance, to affirm
He never heard, e'en while we crowned the girl,
That Juliers' tenure was by Salic law;
That one, confessed her father's cousin's child,
And, she away, indisputable heir,
Against our choice protesting and the Duke's,
Claimed Juliers? — nor, as he preferred his claim,
That first this, then another potentate,
Inclined to its allowance? — I or you,
Or any one except the lady's self?
Oh, it had been the direst cruelty
To break the business to her! Things might change:
At all events, we 'd see next masque at end,
Next mummery over first: and so the edge
Was taken off sharp tidings as they came,
Till here 's the Prince upon us, and there 's she
— Wreathing her hair, a song between her lips,
With just the faintest notion possible
That some such claimant earns a livelihood
About the world, by feigning grievances —
Few pay the story of, but grudge its price,
And fewer listen to, a second time.
Your method proves a failure; now try mine!
And, since this must be carried . . .

*Guibert* [*snatching the paper from him*]. By your leave!

Your zeal transports you! 'T will not serve the Prince
So much as you expect, this course you 'd take.
If she leaves quietly her palace, — well;
But if she died upon its threshold, — no:
He 'd have the trouble of removing her.
Come, gentles, we 're all — what the devil knows!

You, Gaucelme, won't lose character, beside :
You broke your father's heart superiorly
To gather his succession — never blush !
You 're from my province, and, be comforted,
They tell of it with wonder to this day.
You can afford to let your talent sleep.
We 'll take the very worst supposed, as true :
There, the old Duke knew, when he hid his child
Among the river-flowers at Ravestein,
With whom the right lay ! Call the Prince our Duke !
There, she 's no Duchess, she 's no anything
More than a young maid with the bluest eyes :
And now, sirs, we 'll not break this young maid's heart
Coolly as Gaucelme could and would ! No haste !
His talent 's full-blown, ours but in the bud :
We 'll not advance to his perfection yet —
Will we, Sir Maufroy ? See, I 've ruined Maufroy
Forever as a courtier !
*Gaucelme.* Here 's a coil !
And, count us, will you ? Count its residue,
This boasted convoy, this day last year's crowd !
A birthday, too, a gratulation day !
I 'm dumb : bid that keep silence !
*Maufroy and others.* Eh, Sir Guibert ?
He 's right : that does say something : that 's bare truth.
Ten — twelve, I make : a perilous dropping off !
*Guibert.* Pooh — is it audience hour ? The vestibule
Swarms too, I wager, with the common sort
That want our privilege of entry here.
*Gaucelme.* Adolf ! [*Re-enter* ADOLF.] Who 's outside ?

*Guibert.* Oh, your looks suffice!
Nobody waiting?
*Maufroy* [*looking through the door-folds*]. Scarce our number!
*Guibert.* 'Sdeath!
Nothing to beg for, to complain about?
It can't be! Ill news spreads, but not so fast
As thus to frighten all the world!
*Gaucelme.* The world
Lives out of doors, sir — not with you and me
By presence-chamber porches, state-room stairs,
Wherever warmth 's perpetual: outside 's free
To every wind from every compass-point,
And who may get nipped needs be weather-wise.
The Prince comes and the lady's People go;
The snow-goose settles down, the swallows flee —
Why should they wait for winter-time? 'T is instinct.
Don't you feel somewhat chilly?
*Guibert.* That 's their craft?
And last year's crowders-round and criers-forth
That strewed the garlands, overarched the roads,
Lighted the bonfires, sang the loyal songs!
Well 't is my comfort, you could never call me
The People's Friend! The People keep their word —
I keep my place: don't doubt I 'll entertain
The People when the Prince comes, and the People
Are talked of! Then, their speeches — no one tongue
Found respite, not a pen had holiday
— For they wrote, too, as well as spoke, these knaves!
Now see: we tax and tithe them, pill and poll,
They wince and fret enough, but pay they must
— We manage that, — so, pay with a good grace
They might as well, it costs so little more.

But when we 've done with taxes, meet folk next
Outside the toll-booth and the rating-place,
In public — there they have us if they will,
We 're at their mercy after that, you see!
For one tax not ten devils could extort —
Over and above necessity, a grace;
This prompt disbosoming of love, to wit —
Their vine-leaf wrappage of our tribute penny,
And crowding attestation, all works well.
Yet this precisely do they thrust on us!
These cappings quick, these crook-and-cringings low,
Hand to the heart, and forehead to the knee,
With grin that shuts the eyes and opes the mouth —
So tender they their love; and, tender made,
Go home to curse us, the first doit we ask.
As if their souls were any longer theirs!
As if they had not given ample warrant
To who should clap a collar on their neck,
Rings in their nose, a goad to either flank,
And take them for the brute they boast themselves!
Stay — there 's a bustle at the outer door —
And somebody entreating . . . that 's my name!
Adolf, — I heard my name!

*Adolf.* 'T was probably
The suitor.

*Guibert.* Oh, there is one?

*Adolf.* With a suit
He 'd fain enforce in person.

*Guibert.* The good heart
— And the great fool! Just ope the mid-door's fold!
Is that a lappet of his cloak, I see?

*Adolf.* If it bear plenteous sign of travel . . . ay,
The very cloak my comrades tore!

*Guibert.* Why tore?

*Adolf.* He seeks the Duchess' presence in that trim :
Since daybreak, was he posted hereabouts
Lest he should miss the moment.
*Guibert.* Where 's he now ?
*Adolf.* Gone for a minute possibly, not more :
They have ado enough to thrust him back.
*Guibert.* Ay — but my name, I caught ?
*Adolf.* Oh, sir — he said
— What was it ? — You had known him formerly,
And, he believed, would help him did you guess
He waited now ; you promised him as much :
The old plea ! 'Faith, he 's back, — renews the charge !
[*Speaking at the door.*] So long as the man parleys, peace outside —
Nor be too ready with your halberts, there !
*Gaucelme.* My horse bespattered, as he blocked the path
A thin sour man, not unlike somebody.
*Adolf.* He holds a paper in his breast, whereon
He glances when his cheeks flush and his brow
At each repulse —
*Gaucelme.* I noticed he 'd a brow.
*Adolf.* So glancing, he grows calmer, leans awhile
Over the balustrade, adjusts his dress,
And presently turns round, quiet again,
With some new pretext for admittance. — Back !
[*To* GUIBERT.] — Sir, he has seen you ! Now cross halberts ! Ha —
Pascal is prostrate — there lies Fabian too !
No passage ! Whither would the madman press ?
Close the doors quick on me !
*Guibert.* Too late ! He 's here.

*Enter, hastily and with discomposed dress,* VALENCE.

*Valence.* Sir Guibert, will you help me? — me, that come
Charged by your townsmen, all who starve at Cleves,
To represent their heights and depths of woe
Before our Duchess and obtain relief!
Such errands barricade such doors, it seems:
But not a common hindrance drives me back
On all the sad yet hopeful faces, lit
With hope for the first time, which sent me forth.
Cleves, speak for me! Cleves' men and women, speak!
Who followed me — your strongest — many a mile
That I might go the fresher from their ranks,
— Who sit — your weakest — by the city gates,
To take me fuller of what news I bring
As I return — for I must needs return!
— Can I? 'T were hard, no listener for their wrongs,
To turn them back upon the old despair —
Harder, Sir Guibert, than imploring thus —
So, I do — any way you please — implore!
If you . . . but how should you remember Cleves?
Yet they of Cleves remember you so well!
Ay, comment on each trait of you they keep,
Your words and deeds caught up at second hand, —
Proud, I believe, at bottom of their hearts,
O' the very levity and recklessness
Which only prove that you forget their wrongs.
Cleves, the grand town, whose men and women starve,
Is Cleves forgotten? Then, remember me!
You promised me that you would help me once,
For other purpose: will you keep your word?

*Guibert.* And who may you be, friend?

*Valence.* Valence of Cleves.

*Guibert.* Valence of . . . not the advocate of Cleves,
I owed my whole estate to, three years back?
Ay, well may you keep silence! Why, my lords,
You 've heard, I 'm sure, how, Pentecost three years,
I was so nearly ousted of my land
By some knave's-pretext — (eh? when you refused me
Your ugly daughter, Clugnet!) — and you 've heard
How I recovered it by miracle
— (When I refused her!) Here 's the very friend,
— Valence of Cleves, all parties have to thank!
Nay, Valence, this procedure 's vile in you!
I 'm no more grateful than a courtier should,
But politic am I — I bear a brain,
Can cast about a little, might require
Your services a second time. I tried
To tempt you with advancement here to court
— "No!" — well, for curiosity at least
To view our life here — "No!" — our Duchess, then, —
A pretty woman 's worth some pains to see,
Nor is she spoiled, I take it, if a crown
Complete the forehead pale and tresses pure . . .
*Valence.* Our city trusted me its miseries,
And I am come.
*Guibert.* So much for taste! But "come," —
So may you be, for anything I know,
To beg the Pope's cross, or Sir Clugnet's daughter,
And with an equal chance you get all three.
If it was ever worth your while to come,
Was not the proper way worth finding too?
*Valence.* Straight to the palace-portal, sir, I came —
*Guibert.* — And said? —
*Valence.* — That I had brought the miseries
Of a whole city to relieve.

*Guibert.* — Which saying
Won your admittance? You saw me, indeed,
And here, no doubt, you stand: as certainly,
My intervention, I shall not dispute,
Procures you audience; which, if I procure, —
That paper's closely written — by Saint Paul,
Here flock the Wrongs, follow the Remedies,
Chapter and verse, One, Two, A, B and C!
Perhaps you'd enter, make a reverence,
And launch these "miseries" from first to last?
*Valence.* How should they let me pause or turn aside?
*Gaucelme* [*to* VALENCE]. My worthy sir, one question! You've come straight
From Cleves, you tell us: heard you any talk
At Cleves about our lady?
*Valence.* Much.
*Gaucelme.* And what?
*Valence.* Her wish was to redress all wrongs she knew.
*Gaucelme.* That, you believed?
*Valence.* You see me, sir!
*Gaucelme.* — Nor stopped
Upon the road from Cleves to Juliers here,
For any — rumors you might find afloat?
*Valence.* I had my townsmen's wrongs to busy me.
*Gaucelme.* This is the lady's birthday, do you know? — Her day of pleasure?
*Valence.* — That the great, I know,
For pleasure born, should still be on the watch
To exclude pleasure when a duty offers:
Even as, for duty born, the lowly too
May ever snatch a pleasure if in reach:
Both will have plenty of their birthright, sir!
*Gaucelme* [*aside to* GUIBERT]. Sir Guibert, here's your man! No scruples now —

You 'll never find his like! Time presses hard.
I 've seen your drift and Adolf's too, this while,
But you can't keep the hour of audience back
Much longer, and at noon the Prince arrives.
[*Pointing to* VALENCE.] Entrust him with it — fool
no chance away!
*Guibert.* Him?
*Gaucelme.* — With the missive! What 's the
man to her?
*Guibert.* No bad thought! Yet, 't is yours, who
ever played
The tempting serpent: else 't were no bad thought!
I should — and do — mistrust it for your sake,
Or else . . .

*Enter an* Official *who communicates with* ADOLF.

*Adolf.* The Duchess will receive the court.
*Guibert.* Give us a moment, Adolf! Valence,
friend,
I 'll help you. We of the service, you 're to mark,
Have special entry, while the herd . . . the folk
Outside, get access through our help alone;
— Well, it is so, was so, and I suppose
So ever will be: your natural lot is, therefore,
To wait your turn and opportunity,
And probably miss both. Now, I engage
To set you, here and in a minute's space,
Before the lady, with full leave to plead
Chapter and verse, and A, and B, and C,
To heart's content.
*Valence.* I grieve that I must ask, —
This being, yourself admit, the custom here, —
To what the price of such a favor mounts?

*Guibert.* Just so! You 're not without a courtier's tact.
Little at court, as your quick instinct prompts,
Do such as we without a recompense.
*Valence.* Yours is? —
*Guibert.* A trifle: here 's a document
'T is some one's duty to present her Grace —
I say, not mine — these say, not theirs — such points
Have weight at court. Will you relieve us all
And take it? Just say, "I am bidden lay
This paper at the Duchess' feet!"
*Valence.* No more?
I thank you, sir!
*Adolf.* Her Grace receives the court.
*Guibert* [*aside*]. Now, *sursum corda*, quoth the mass-priest! Do —
Whoever's my kind saint, do let alone
These pushings to and fro, and pullings back;
Peaceably let me hang o' the devil's arm
The downward path, if you can't pluck me off
Completely! Let me live quite his, or yours!
[*The* Courtiers *begin to range themselves, and move toward the door.*
After me, Valence! So, our famous Cleves
Lacks bread? Yet don't we gallants buy their lace?
And dear enough — it beggars me, I know,
To keep my very gloves fringed properly.
This, Valence, is our Great State Hall you cross;
Yon gray urn 's veritable marcasite,
The Pope's gift: and those salvers testify
The Emperor. Presently you 'll set your foot
. . . But you don't speak, friend Valence!
*Valence.* I shall speak.

*Gaucelme* [*aside to* GUIBERT]. Guibert — it were
no such ungraceful thing
If you and I, at first, seemed horror-struck
With the bad news. Look here, what you shall do.
Suppose you, first, clap hand to sword and cry
"Yield strangers our allegiance? First I'll perish
Beside your Grace!" — and so give me the cue
To . . .

*Guibert.* — Clap your hand to note-book and jot
down
That to regale the Prince with? I conceive.
[*To* VALENCE.] Do, Valence, speak, or I shall half
suspect
You're plotting to supplant us, me the first,
I' the lady's favor! Is't the grand harangue
You mean to make, that thus engrosses you?
— Which of her virtues you'll apostrophize?
Or is't the fashion you aspire to start,
Of that close-curled, not unbecoming hair?
Or what else ponder you?

*Valence.* My townsmen's wrongs.

## ACT II.

NOON.

SCENE.—*The Presence-chamber.*

*The* DUCHESS *and* SABYNE.

*The Duchess.* Announce that I am ready for the
court!

*Sabyne.* 'Tis scarcely audience-hour, I think; your
Grace

May best consult your own relief, no doubt,
And shun the crowd : but few can have arrived.
*The Duchess.* Let those not yet arrived, then, keep away !
'T was me, this day last year at Ravestein,
You hurried. It has been full time, beside,
This half-hour. Do you hesitate ?
*Sabyne.* Forgive me !
*The Duchess.* Stay, Sabyne ; let me hasten to make sure
Of one true thanker : here with you begins
My audience, claim you first its privilege !
It is my birth's event they celebrate :
You need not wish me more such happy days,
But — ask some favor ! Have you none to ask ?
Has Adolf none, then ? this was far from least
Of much I waited for impatiently,
Assure yourself ! It seemed so natural
Your gift, beside this bunch of river-bells,
Should be the power and leave of doing good
To you, and greater pleasure to myself.
You ask my leave to-day to marry Adolf ?
The rest is my concern.
*Sabyne.* Your Grace is ever
Our lady of dear Ravestein, — but, for Adolf . . .
*The Duchess.* "But" ? You have not, sure, changed in your regard
And purpose towards him ?
*Sabyne.* We change ?
*The Duchess.* Well then ? Well ?
*Sabyne.* How could we two be happy, and, most like,
Leave Juliers, when — when . . . but 't is audience-time !

*The Duchess.* "When, if you left me, I were left indeed!"
Would you subjoin that? — Bid the court approach!
— Why should we play thus with each other, Sabyne?
Do I not know, if courtiers prove remiss,
If friends detain me, and get blame for it,
There is a cause? Of last year's fervid throng
Scarce one half comes now.
*Sabyne* [*aside*]. One half? No, alas!
*The Duchess.* So can the mere suspicion of a cloud
Over my fortunes, strike each loyal heart.
They 've heard of this Prince Berthold; and, forsooth,
Some foolish arrogant pretence he makes,
May grow more foolish and more arrogant,
They please to apprehend! I thank their love.
Admit them!
*Sabyne* [*aside*]. How much has she really learned?
*The Duchess.* Surely, whoever's absent, Tristan waits?
— Or at least Romuald, whom my father raised
From nothing — come, he 's faithful to me, come!
(Sabyne, I should but be the prouder — yes,
The fitter to comport myself aright)
Not Romuald? Xavier — what said he to that?
For Xavier hates a parasite, I know!
[SABYNE *goes out.*
*The Duchess.* Well, sunshine's everywhere, and summer too.
Next year 't is the old place again, perhaps —
The water-breeze again, the birds again.
— It cannot be! It is too late to be!
What part had I, or choice in all of it?
Hither they brought me; I had not to think
Nor care, concern myself with doing good

Or ill, my task was just — to live, — to live,
And, answering ends there was no need explain,
To render Juliers happy — so they said.
All could not have been falsehood: some was love,
And wonder and obedience. I did all
They looked for: why then cease to do it now?
Yet this is to be calmly set aside,
And — ere next birthday's dawn, for aught I know,
Things change, a claimant may arrive, and I . . .
It cannot nor it shall not be! His right?
Well then, he has the right, and I have not,
— But who bade all of you surround my life
And close its growth up with your ducal crown
Which, plucked off rudely, leaves me perishing?
I could have been like one of you, — loved, hoped,
Feared, lived and died like one of you — but you
Would take that life away and give me this,
And I will keep this! I will face you! Come!

*Enter the* Courtiers *and* VALENCE.

*The Courtiers.* Many such happy mornings to your Grace!

*The Duchess* [*aside, as they pay their devoir*]. The same words, the same faces, — the same love!
I have been overfearful. These are few;
But these, at least, stand firmly: these are mine.
As many come as may; and if no more,
'T is that these few suffice — they do suffice!
What succor may not next year bring me? Plainly,
I feared too soon. [*To the* Courtiers.] I thank you, sirs: all thanks!

*Valence* [*aside, as the* DUCHESS *passes from one group to another, conversing*]. 'T is she — the vision this day last year brought,

When, for a golden moment at our Cleves,
She tarried in her progress hither. Cleves
Chose me to speak its welcome, and I spoke
— Not that she could have noted the recluse
— Ungainly, old before his time — who gazed.
Well, Heaven's gifts are not wasted, and that gaze
Kept, and shall keep me to the end, her own!
She was above it — but so would not sink
My gaze to earth! The People caught it, hers —
Thenceforward, mine; but thus entirely mine,
Who shall affirm, had she not raised my soul
Ere she retired and left me — them? She turns —
There's all her wondrous face at once! The ground
Reels and . . . [*suddenly occupying himself with his paper*].
These wrongs of theirs I have to plead!
*The Duchess* [*to the* Courtiers]. Nay, compliment
enough! and kindness' self
Should pause before it wish me more such years.
'T was fortunate that thus, ere youth escaped,
I tasted life's pure pleasure — one such, pure,
Is worth a thousand, mixed — and youth 's for pleasure:
Mine is received; let my age pay for it.
*Gaucelme*. So, pay, and pleasure paid for, thinks
your Grace,
Should never go together?
*Guibert*. How, Sir Gaucelme?
Hurry one's feast down unenjoyingly
At the snatched breathing-intervals of work?
As good you saved it till the dull day's-end
When, stiff and sleepy, appetite is gone.
Eat first, then work upon the strength of food!
*The Duchess*. True: you enable me to risk my
future,

By giving me a past beyond recall.
I lived, a girl, one happy leisure year :
Let me endeavor to be the Duchess now !
And so, — what news, Sir Guibert, spoke you of?
[*As they advance a little, and* GUIBERT *speaks* —
— That gentleman ?
*Valence* [*aside*]. I feel her eyes on me.
*Guibert* [*to* VALENCE]. The Duchess, sir, inclines to hear your suit.
Advance ! He is from Cleves.
*Valence* [*coming forward. Aside*]. Their wrongs — their wrongs !
*The Duchess*. And you, sir, are from Cleves ? How fresh in mind,
The hour or two I passed at queenly Cleves !
She entertained me bravely, but the best
Of her good pageant seemed its standers-by
With insuppressive joy on every face !
What says my ancient famous happy Cleves ?
*Valence*. Take the truth, lady — you are made for truth !
So think my friends : nor do they less deserve
The having you to take it, you shall think,
When you know all — nay, when you only know
How, on that day you recollect at Cleves,
When the poor acquiescing multitude
Who thrust themselves with all their woes apart
Into unnoticed corners, that the few,
Their means sufficed to muster trappings for,
Might fill the foreground, occupy your sight
With joyous faces fit to bear away
And boast of as a sample of all Cleves
— How, when to daylight these crept out once more,
Clutching, unconscious, each his empty rags

Whence the scant coin, which had not half bought
bread,
That morn he shook forth, counted piece by piece,
And, well-advisedly, on perfumes spent them
To burn, or flowers to strew, before your path
— How, when the golden flood of music and bliss
Ebbed, as their moon retreated, and again
Left the sharp black-point rocks of misery bare
— Then I, their friend, had only to suggest
"Saw she the horror as she saw the pomp!"
And as one man they cried "He speaks the truth:
Show her the horror! Take from our own mouths
Our wrongs and show them, she will see them too!"
This they cried, lady! I have brought the wrongs.

*The Duchess.* Wrongs? Cleves has wrongs —
apparent now and thus?
I thank you! In that paper? Give it me!

*Valence.* (There, Cleves!) In this! (What did
I promise, Cleves?)
Our weavers, clothiers, spinners are reduced
Since . . . Oh, I crave your pardon! I forget
I buy the privilege of this approach,
And promptly would discharge my debt. I lay
This paper humbly at the Duchess' feet.

[*Presenting* GUIBERT'S *paper.*

*Guibert.* Stay! for the present . . .

*The Duchess.* Stay, sir? I take aught
That teaches me their wrongs with greater pride
Than this your ducal circlet. Thank you, sir!

[*The* DUCHESS *reads hastily; then, turning to the* Courtiers —

What have I done to you? Your deed or mine
Was it, this crowning me? I gave myself
No more a title to your homage, no,

Than church-flowers, born this season, wrote the words
In the saint's-book that sanctified them first.
For such a flower, you plucked me; well, you erred —
Well, 't was a weed; remove the eye-sore quick!
But should you not remember it has lain
Steeped in the candles' glory, palely shrined,
Nearer God's Mother than most earthly things?
— That if 't be faded 't is with prayer's sole breath —
That the one day it boasted was God's day?
Still, I do thank you! Had you used respect,
Here might I dwindle to my last white leaf,
Here lose life's latest freshness, which even yet
May yield some wandering insect rest and food:
So, fling me forth, and — all is best for all!
[*After a pause.*] Prince Berthold, who art Juliers'
Duke it seems —
The King's choice, and the Emperor's, and the
Pope's —
Be mine, too! Take this People! Tell not me
Of rescripts, precedents, authorities,
— But take them, from a heart that yearns to give!
Find out their love, — I could not; find their fear, —
I would not; find their like, — I never shall,
Among the flowers! [*Taking off her coronet.*
Colombe of Ravestein
Thanks God she is no longer Duchess here!
*Valence* [*advancing to* GUIBERT]. Sir Guibert,
knight, they call you — this of mine
Is the first step I ever set at court.
You dared make me your instrument, I find;
For that, so sure as you and I are men,
We reckon to the utmost presently:
But as you are a courtier and I none,
Your knowledge may instruct me. I, already,

Have too far outraged, by my ignorance
Of courtier-ways, this lady, to proceed
A second step and risk addressing her:
— I am degraded — you let me address!
Out of her presence, all is plain enough
What I shall do — but in her presence, too,
Surely there 's something proper to be done.
[*To the others.*] You, gentles, tell me if I guess aright —
May I not strike this man to earth?
*The Courtiers* [*as* GUIBERT *springs forward, withholding him*]. Let go!
— The clothiers' spokesman, Guibert? Grace a churl?
*The Duchess* [*to* VALENCE]. Oh, be acquainted with your party, sir!
He 's of the oldest lineage Juliers boasts;
A lion crests him for a cognizance;
"Scorning to waver" — that 's his 'scutcheon's word;
His office with the new Duke — probably
The same in honor as with me; or more,
By so much as this gallant turn deserves.
He 's now, I dare say, of a thousand times
The rank and influence that remain with her
Whose part you take! So, lest for taking it
You suffer . . .
*Valence.* I may strike him then to earth?
*Guibert* [*falling on his knee*]. Great and dear lady, pardon me! Hear once!
Believe me and be merciful — be just!
I could not bring myself to give that paper
Without a keener pang than I dared meet
— And so felt Clugnet here, and Maufroy here
— No one dared meet it. Protestation 's cheap, —

But, if to die for you did any good,
[*To* GAUCELME.] Would not I die, sir? Say your worst of me!
But it does no good, that's the mournful truth.
And since the hint of a resistance, even,
Would just precipitate, on you the first,
A speedier ruin — I shall not deny,
Saving myself indubitable pain,
I thought to give you pleasure (who might say?)
By showing that your only subject found
To carry the sad notice, was the man
Precisely ignorant of its contents;
A nameless, mere provincial advocate;
One whom 't was like you never saw before,
Never would see again. All has gone wrong;
But I meant right, God knows, and you, I trust!

*The Duchess.* A nameless advocate, this gentleman? — (I pardon you, Sir Guibert!)

*Guibert* [*rising, to* VALENCE]. Sir, and you?

*Valence.* — Rejoice that you are lightened of a load.
Now, you have only me to reckon with.

*The Duchess.* One I have never seen, much less obliged?

*Valence.* Dare I speak, lady?

*The Duchess.* Dare you! Heard you not I rule no longer?

*Valence.* Lady, if your rule
Were based alone on such a ground as these
[*Pointing to the* Courtiers.
Could furnish you, — abjure it! They have hidden
A source of true dominion from your sight.

*The Duchess.* You hear them — no such source is left . . .

*Valence.* Hear Cleves!

Whose haggard craftsmen rose to starve this day,
Starve now, and will lie down at night to starve,
Sure of a like to-morrow — but as sure
Of a most unlike morrow-after-that,
Since end things must, end howsoe'er things may.
What curbs the brute-force instinct in its hour?
What makes — instead of rising, all as one,
And teaching fingers, so expert to wield
Their tool, the broadsword's play or carbine's trick,
— What makes that there's an easier help, they think,
For you, whose name so few of them can spell,
Whose face scarce one in every hundred saw, —
You simply have to understand their wrongs,
And wrongs will vanish — so, still trades are plied,
And swords lie rusting, and myself stand here?
There is a vision in the heart of each
Of justice, mercy, wisdom, tenderness
To wrong and pain, and knowledge of its cure:
And these embodied in a woman's form
That best transmits them, pure as first received,
From God above her, to mankind below.
Will you derive your rule from such a ground,
Or rather hold it by the suffrage, say,
Of this man — this — and this?

*The Duchess* [*after a pause*]. You come from Cleves:
How many are at Cleves of such a mind?

*Valence* [*from his paper*]. "We, all the manufacturers of Cleves —"

*The Duchess.* Or stay, sir — lest I seem too covetous —
Are you my subject? such as you describe,
Am I to you, though to no other man?

*Valence* [*from his paper*]. — "Valence, ordained
your Advocate at Cleves" —
*The Duchess* [*replacing the coronet*]. Then I re-
main Cleves' Duchess! Take you note,
While Cleves but yields one subject of this stamp,
I stand her lady till she waves me off!
For her sake, all the Prince claims I withhold;
Laugh at each menace; and, his power defying,
Return his missive with its due contempt!
[*Casting it away.*
*Guibert* [*picking it up*]. — Which to the Prince
I will deliver, lady,
(Note it down, Gaucelme) — with your message too!
*The Duchess.* I think the office is a subject's, sir!
— Either . . . how style you him? — my special
guarder
The Marshal's — for who knows but violence
May follow the delivery? — Or, perhaps,
My Chancellor's — for law may be to urge
On its receipt! — Or, even my Chamberlain's —
For I may violate established form!
[*To* VALENCE.] Sir, — for the half-hour till this service
ends,
Will you become all these to me?
*Valence* [*falling on his knee*]. My liege!
*The Duchess.* Give me!
[*The* Courtiers *present their badges of office.*
[*Putting them by.*] Whatever was their virtue once,
They need new consecration. [*Raising* VALENCE.]
Are you mine?
I will be Duchess yet! [*She retires.*
*The Courtiers.* Our Duchess yet!
A glorious lady! Worthy love and dread!
I'll stand by her. — And I, whate'er betide!

*Guibert* [*to* VALENCE]. Well done, well done, sir!
I care not who knows,
You have done nobly and I envy you —
Tho' I am but unfairly used, I think:
For when one gets a place like this I hold,
One gets too the remark that its mere wages,
The pay and the preferment, make our prize.
Talk about zeal and faith apart from these,
We're laughed at — much would zeal and faith subsist
Without these also! Yet, let these be stopped,
Our wages discontinue, — then, indeed,
Our zeal and faith, (we hear on every side,)
Are not released — having been pledged away
I wonder, for what zeal and faith in turn?
Hard money purchased me my place! No, no —
I'm right, sir — but your wrong is better still,
If I had time and skill to argue it.
Therefore, I say, I'll serve you, how you please —
If you like, — fight you, as you seem to wish —
(The kinder of me that, in sober truth,
I never dreamed I did you any harm) . . .

*Gaucelme.* — Or, kinder still, you'll introduce, no doubt,
His merits to the Prince who's just at hand,
And let no hint drop he's made Chancellor
And Chamberlain and Heaven knows what beside!

*Clugnet* [*to* VALENCE]. You stare, young sir, and threaten! Let me say,
That at your age, when first I came to court,
I was not much above a gentleman;
While now . . .

*Valence.* You are Head-Lackey? With your office
I have not yet been graced, sir!

*Other Courtiers* [*to* CLUGNET]. Let him talk!

Fidelity, disinterestedness,
Excuse so much! Men claim my worship ever
Who staunchly and steadfastly . . .

*Enter* ADOLF.

*Adolf.* The Prince arrives.
*Courtiers.* Ha? How?
*Adolf.* He leaves his guard a stage behind
At Aix, and enters almost by himself.
*1st Courtier.* The Prince! This foolish business puts all out.
*2nd Courtier.* Let Gaucelme speak first!
*3rd Courtier.* Better I began
About the state of Juliers: should one say
All 's prosperous and inviting him?
*4th Courtier.* — Or rather,
All 's prostrate and imploring him?
*5th Courtier.* That 's best
Where 's the Cleves' paper, by the way?
*4th Courtier* [*to* VALENCE]. Sir — sir —
If you 'll but lend that paper — trust it me,
I 'll warrant . . .
*5th Courtier.* Softly, sir — the Marshal's duty!
*Clugnet.* Has not the Chamberlain a hearing first
By virtue of his patent?
*Gaucelme.* Patents? — Duties?
All that, my masters, must begin again!
One word composes the whole controversy:
We 're simply now — the Prince's!
*The Others.* Ay — the Prince's!

*Enter* SABYNE.

*Sabyne.* Adolf! Bid . . . Oh, no time for ceremony!

Where 's whom our lady calls her only subject?
She needs him. Who is here the Duchess's?
*Valence* [*starting from his reverie*]. Most gratefully
I follow to her feet.

## ACT III.

AFTERNOON.

SCENE. — *The Vestibule.*

*Enter* PRINCE BERTHOLD *and* MELCHIOR.

*Berthold.* A thriving little burgh this Juliers looks.
[*Half-apart.*] Keep Juliers, and as good you kept Cologne:
Better try Aix, though! —
*Melchior.* Please 't your Highness speak?
*Berthold* [*as before*]. Aix, Cologne, Frankfort, — Milan; — Rome! —
*Melchior.* The Grave.
More weary seems your Highness, I remark,
Than sundry conquerors whose path I 've watched
Through fire and blood to any prize they gain.
I could well wish you, for your proper sake,
Had met some shade of opposition here
— Found a blunt seneschal refuse unlock,
Or a scared usher lead your steps astray.
You must not look for next achievement's palm
So easily: this will hurt your conquering.
*Berthold.* My next? Ay, as you say, my next and next!
Well, I am tired, that 's truth, and moody too,
This quiet entrance-morning: listen why!

Our little burgh, now, Juliers — 't is indeed
One link, however insignificant,
Of the great chain by which I reach my hope,
— A link I must secure; but otherwise,
You 'd wonder I esteem it worth my grasp.
Just see what life is, with its shifts and turns!
It happens now — this very nook — to be
A place that once . . not a long while since, neither —
When I lived an ambiguous hanger-on
Of foreign courts, and bore my claims about,
Discarded by one kinsman, and the other
A poor priest merely, — then, I say, this place
Shone my ambition's object; to be Duke —
Seemed then, what to be Emperor seems now.
My rights were far from judged as plain and sure
In those days as of late, I promise you:
And 't was my day-dream, Lady Colombe here
Might e'en compound the matter, pity me,
Be struck, say, with my chivalry and grace
(I was a boy!) — bestow her hand at length,
And make me Duke, in her right if not mine.
Here am I, Duke confessed, at Juliers now.
Hearken: if ever I be Emperor,
Remind me what I felt and said to-day!

*Melchior.* All this consoles a bookish man like me.
— And so will weariness cling to you. Wrong,
Wrong! Had you sought the lady's court yourself, —
Faced the redoubtables composing it,
Flattered this, threatened that man, bribed the other, —
Pleaded by writ and word and deed, your cause, —
Conquered a footing inch by painful inch, —
And, after long years' struggle, pounced at last
On her for prize, — the right life had been lived,
And justice done to divers faculties

Shut in that brow. Yourself were visible
As you stood victor, then; whom now — (your pardon!)
I am forced narrowly to search and see,
So are you hid by helps — this Pope, your uncle —
Your cousin, the other King! You are a mind, —
They, body: too much of mere legs-and-arms
Obstructs the mind so! Match these with their like:
Match mind with mind!

*Berthold.* And where's your mind to match?
They show me legs-and-arms to cope withal!
I'd subjugate this city — where's its mind?

[*The* Courtiers *enter slowly.*

*Melchior.* Got out of sight when you came troops and all!
And in its stead, here greets you flesh-and-blood:
A smug œconomy of both, this first!

[*As* CLUGNET *bows obsequiously.*

Well done, gout, all considered! — I may go?

*Berthold.* Help me receive them!

*Melchior.* Oh, they just will say
What yesterday at Aix their fellows said —
At Treves, the day before! Sir Prince, my friend,
Why do you let your life slip thus? — Meantime,
I have my little Juliers to achieve —
The understanding this tough Platonist,
Your holy uncle disinterred, Amelius:
Lend me a company of horse and foot,
To help me through his tractate — gain my Duchy!

*Berthold.* And Empire, after that is gained, will be —?

*Melchior.* To help me through your uncle's comment, Prince!

[*Goes.*

*Berthold.* Ah? Well: he o'er-refines — the scholar's fault!
How do I let my life slip? Say, this life,
I lead now, differs from the common life
Of other men in mere degree, not kind,
Of joys and griefs, — still there is such degree
Mere largeness in a life is something, sure, —
Enough to care about and struggle for,
In this world: for this world, the size of things;
The sort of things, for that to come, no doubt.
A great is better than a little aim:
And when I wooed Priscilla's rosy mouth
And failed so, under that gray convent-wall,
Was I more happy than I should be now
[*By this time, the* Courtiers *are ranged before him.*
If failing of my Empire? Not a whit.
— Here comes the mind, it once had tasked me sore
To baffle, but for my advantages!
All 's best as 't is: these scholars talk and talk.
[*Seats himself.*
*The Courtiers.* Welcome our Prince to Juliers! — to his heritage!
Our dutifullest service proffer we!
*Clugnet.* I, please your Highness, having exercised
The function of Grand Chamberlain at court,
With much acceptance, as men testify . . .
*Berthold.* I cannot greatly thank you, gentlemen!
The Pope declares my claim to the Duchy founded
On strictest justice — you concede it, therefore,
I do not wonder: and the kings my friends
Protest they mean to see such claim enforced, —
You easily may offer to assist.
But there 's a slight discretionary power
To serve me in the matter, you 've had long,

Though late you use it. This is well to say —
But could you not have said it months ago?
I'm not denied my own Duke's truncheon, true —
'T is flung me — I stoop down, and from the ground
Pick it, with all you placid standers-by:
And now I have it, gems and mire at once,
Grace go with it to my soiled hands, you say!
*Guibert.* (By Paul, the advocate our doughty friend
Cuts the best figure!)
*Gaucelme.* If our ignorance
May have offended, sure our loyalty . . .
*Berthold.* Loyalty? Yours? Oh — of yourselves you speak!
I mean the Duchess all this time, I hope!
And since I have been forced repeat my claims
As if they never had been urged before,
As I began, so must I end, it seems.
The formal answer to the grave demand!
What says the lady?
*Courtiers* [*one to another*]. *1st Courtier.* Marshal!
*2nd Courtier.* Orator!
*Guibert.* A variation of our mistress' way!
Wipe off his boots' dust, Clugnet! — that, he waits!
*1st Courtier.* Your place!
*2nd Courtier.* Just now it was your own!
*Guibert.* The devil's!
*Berthold* [*to* GUIBERT]. Come forward, friend — you with the paper, there!
Is Juliers the first city I've obtained?
By this time, I may boast proficiency
In each decorum of the circumstance.
Give it me as she gave it — the petition,
Demand, you style it! What's required, in brief?

What title's reservation, appanage's
Allowance? I heard all at Treves, last week.
*Gaucelme* [*to* GUIBERT]. "Give it him as she gave it!"
*Guibert.* And why not?
[*To* BERTHOLD.] The lady crushed your summons thus together,
And bade me, with the very greatest scorn
So fair a frame could hold, inform you . . .
*Courtiers.* Stop —
Idiot!
*Guibert.* — Inform you she denied your claim,
Defied yourself! (I tread upon his heel,
The blustering advocate!)
*Berthold.* By heaven and earth!
Dare you jest, sir?
*Guibert.* Did they at Treves, last week?
*Berthold* [*starting up*]. Why then, I look much bolder than I knew,
And you prove better actors than I thought:
Since, as I live, I took you as you entered
For just so many dearest friends of mine,
Fled from the sinking to the rising power
— The sneaking'st crew, in short, I e'er despised!
Whereas, I am alone here for the moment,
With every soldier left behind at Aix!
Silence? That means the worst? I thought as much!
What follows next then?
*Courtiers.* Gracious Prince, he raves!
*Guibert.* He asked the truth and why not get the truth?
*Berthold.* Am I a prisoner? Speak, will somebody?
— But why stand paltering with imbeciles?
Let me see her, or . . .

*Guibert.* Her, without her leave,
Shall no one see; she's Duchess yet!
*Courtiers* [*footsteps without, as they are disputing*].
Good chance!
She 's here — the Lady Colombe's self!
*Berthold.* 'T is well!
[*Aside.*] Array a handful thus against my world?
Not ill done, truly! Were not this a mind
To match one's mind with? Colombe! Let us wait!
I failed so, under that gray convent wall!
She comes.
*Guibert.* The Duchess! Strangers, range yourselves!
[*As the* Duchess *enters in conversation with* Valence, Berthold *and the* Courtiers *fall back a little.*
*The Duchess.* Presagefully it beats, presagefully,
My heart: the right is Berthold's and not mine.
*Valence.* Grant that he has the right, dare I mistrust
Your power to acquiesce so patiently
As you believe, in such a dream-like change
Of fortune — change abrupt, profound, complete?
*The Duchess.* Ah, the first bitterness is over now!
Bitter I may have felt it to confront
The truth, and ascertain those natures' value
I had so counted on; that was a pang:
But I did bear it, and the worst is over.
Let the Prince take them!
*Valence.* And take Juliers too?
— Your people without crosses, wands and chains —
Only with hearts?
*The Duchess.* There I feel guilty, sir!
I cannot give up what I never had:
For I ruled these, not them — these stood between.

Shall I confess, sir? I have heard by stealth
Of Berthold from the first; more news and more:
Closer and closer swam the thundercloud,
But I was safely housed with these, I knew.
At times when to the casement I would turn,
At a bird's passage or a flower-trail's play,
I caught the storm's red glimpses on its edge —
Yet I was sure some one of all these friends
Would interpose: I followed the bird's flight
Or plucked the flower: some one would interpose!

*Valence.* Not one thought on the People — and Cleves there!

*The Duchess.* Now, sadly conscious my real sway was missed,
Its shadow goes without so much regret:
Else could I not again thus calmly bid you,
Answer Prince Berthold!

*Valence.* Then you acquiesce?

*The Duchess.* Remember over whom it was I ruled!

*Guibert* [*stepping forward*]. Prince Berthold, yonder, craves an audience, lady!

*The Duchess* [*to* VALENCE]. I only have to turn, and I shall face
Prince Berthold! Oh, my very heart is sick!
It is the daughter of a line of Dukes
This scornful insolent adventurer
Will bid depart from my dead father's halls!
I shall not answer him — dispute with him —
But, as he bids, depart! Prevent it, sir!
Sir — but a mere day's respite! Urge for me
— What I shall call to mind I should have urged
When time 's gone by: 't will all be mine, you urge!
A day — an hour — that I myself may lay

My rule down! 'T is too sudden — must not be!
The world 's to hear of it! Once done — forever!
How will it read, sir? How be sung about?
Prevent it!
*Berthold* [*approaching*]. Your frank indignation, lady,
Cannot escape me. Overbold I seem;
But somewhat should be pardoned my surprise
At this reception, — this defiance, rather.
And if, for their and your sake, I rejoice
Your virtues could inspire a trusty few
To make such gallant stand in your behalf,
I cannot but be sorry, for my own,
Your friends should force me to retrace my steps:
Since I no longer am permitted speak
After the pleasant peaceful course prescribed
No less by courtesy than relationship —
Which I remember, if you once forgot.
But never must attack pass unrepelled.
Suffer that, through you, I demand of these,
Who controverts my claim to Juliers?
*The Duchess.* — Me
You say, you do not speak to —
*Berthold.* Of your subjects
I ask, then: whom do you accredit? Where
Stand those should answer?
*Valence* [*advancing*]. The lady is alone.
*Berthold.* Alone, and thus? So weak and yet so bold?
*Valence.* I said she was alone —
*Berthold.* And weak, I said.
*Valence.* When is man strong until he feels alone?
It was some lonely strength at first, be sure,
Created organs, such as those you seek,

By which to give its varied purpose shape :
And, naming the selected ministrants,
Took sword, and shield, and sceptre, — each, a man !
That strength performed its work and passed its way :
You see our lady : there, the old shapes stand !
— A Marshal, Chamberlain, and Chancellor —
"Be helped their way, into their death put life
And find advantage ! " — so you counsel us.
But let strength feel alone, seek help itself, —
And, as the inland-hatched sea-creature hunts
The sea's breast out, — as, littered 'mid the waves
The desert-brute makes for the desert's joy,
So turns our lady to her true resource,
Passing o'er hollow fictions, worn-out types,
— And I am first her instinct fastens on.
And prompt I say, as clear as heart can speak,
The People will not have you ; nor shall have !
It is not merely I shall go bring Cleves
And fight you to the last, — though that does much,
And men and children, — ay, and women too,
Fighting for home, are rather to be feared
Than mercenaries fighting for their pay —
But, say you beat us, since such things have been,
And, where this Juliers laughed, you set your foot
Upon a steaming bloody plash — what then ?
Stand you the more our lord that there you stand ?
Lord it o'er troops whose force you concentrate,
A pillared flame whereto all ardors tend —
Lord it 'mid priests whose schemes you amplify,
A cloud of smoke 'neath which all shadows brood —
But never, in this gentle spot of earth,
Can you become our Colombe, our play-queen,
For whom, to furnish lilies for her hair,

We 'd pour our veins forth to enrich the soil.
— Our conqueror? Yes! — Our despot? Yes! — Our Duke?
Know yourself, know us!
*Berthold* [*who has been in thought*]. Know your lady, also!
[*Very deferentially.*] — To whom I needs must exculpate myself
For having made a rash demand, at least.
Wherefore to you, sir, who appear to be
Her chief adviser, I submit my claims, [*Giving papers.*
But, this step taken, take no further step,
Until the Duchess shall pronounce their worth.
Here be our meeting-place; at night, its time:
Till when I humbly take the lady's leave!
[*He withdraws. As the* DUCHESS *turns to* VALENCE, *the* Courtiers *interchange glances and come forward a little.*
*1st Courtier.* So, this was their device!
*2nd Courtier.* No bad device!
*3rd Courtier.* You 'd say they love each other, Guibert's friend
From Cleves, and she, the Duchess!
*4th Courtier.* — And moreover,
That all Prince Berthold comes for, is to help
Their loves!
*5th Courtier.* Pray, Guibert, what is next to do?
*Guibert* [*advancing*]. I laid my office at the Duchess' foot —
*Others.* And I — and I — and I!
*The Duchess.* I took them, sirs.
*Guibert* [*apart to* VALENCE]. And now, sir, I am simple knight again —
Guibert, of the great ancient house, as yet

That never bore affront; whate'er your birth,—
As things stand now, I recognize yourself
(If you 'll accept experience of some date)
As like to be the leading man o' the time,
Therefore as much above me now, as I
Seemed above you this morning. Then, I offered
To fight you: will you be as generous
And now fight me?

*Valence.* Ask when my life is mine!

*Guibert.* ('T is hers now!)

*Clugnet* [*apart to* VALENCE, *as* GUIBERT *turns from him*]. You, sir, have insulted me
Grossly,— will grant me, too, the selfsame favor
You 've granted him, just now, I make no question?

*Valence.* I promise you, as him, sir.

*Clugnet.* Do you so?
Handsomely said! I hold you to it, sir.
You 'll get me reinstated in my office
As you will Guibert!

*The Duchess.* I would be alone!

[*They begin to retire slowly; as* VALENCE *is about to follow* —

Alone, sir — only with my heart: you stay!

*Gaucelme.* You hear that? Ah, light breaks upon me! Cleves —
It was at Cleves some man harangued us all —
With great effect, — so those who listened said,
My thoughts being busy elsewhere: was this he?
Guibert, — your strange, disinterested man!
Your uncorrupted, if uncourtly friend!
The modest worth you mean to patronize!
He cares about no Duchesses, not he —
His sole concern is with the wrongs of Cleves!
What, Guibert? What, it breaks on you at last?

*Guibert.* Would this hall's floor were a mine's roof! I 'd back
And in her very face . . .
*Gaucelme.* Apply the match
That fired the train, — and where would you be, pray?
*Guibert.* With him!
*Gaucelme.* Stand, rather, safe outside with me!
The mine 's charged: shall I furnish you the match
And place you properly? To the antechamber!
*Guibert.* Can you?
*Gaucelme.* Try me! Your friend 's in fortune!
*Guibert.* Quick —
To the antechamber! He is pale with bliss!
*Gaucelme.* No wonder! Mark her eyes!
*Guibert.* To the antechamber!
[*The* Courtiers *retire.*
*The Duchess.* Sir, could you know all you have done for me
You were content! You spoke, and I am saved.
*Valence.* Be not too sanguine, lady! Ere you dream,
That transient flush of generosity
Fades off, perchance. The man, beside, is gone, —
Him we might bend; but see, the papers here —
Inalterably his requirement stays,
And cold hard words have we to deal with now.
In that large eye there seemed a latent pride,
To self-denial not incompetent,
But very like to hold itself dispensed
From such a grace: however, let us hope!
He is a noble spirit in noble form.
I wish he less had bent that brow to smile
As with the fancy how he could subject
Himself upon occasion to — himself!

From rudeness, violence, you rest secure;
But do not think your Duchy rescued yet!
*The Duchess.* You, — who have opened a new world to me,
Will never take the faded language up
Of that I leave? My Duchy — keeping it,
Or losing it — is that my sole world now?
*Valence.* Ill have I spoken if you thence despise
Juliers; although the lowest, on true grounds,
Be worth more than the highest rule, on false:
Aspire to rule, on the true grounds!
*The Duchess.* Nay, hear —
False, I will never — rash, I would not be!
This is indeed my birthday — soul and body,
Its hours have done on me the work of years.
You hold the requisition: ponder it!
If I have right, my duty 's plain: if he —
Say so, nor ever change a tone of voice!
At night you meet the Prince; meet me at eve!
Till when, farewell! This discomposes you?
Believe in your own nature, and its force
Of renovating mine! I take my stand
Only as under me the earth is firm:
So, prove the first step stable, all will prove.
That first, I choose: [*Laying her hand on his.*] — the next to take, choose you! [*She withdraws.*
*Valence* [*after a pause*]. What drew down this on me? — on me, dead once,
She thus bids live, — since all I hitherto
Thought dead in me, youth's ardors and emprise,
Burst into life before her, as she bids
Who needs them. Whither will this reach, where end?
Her hand's print burns on mine . . . Yet she 's above —

So very far above me! All 's too plain:
I served her when the others sank away,
And she rewards me as such souls reward —
The changed voice, the suffusion of the cheek,
The eye's acceptance, the expressive hand,
— Reward, that 's little, in her generous thought,
Though all to me . . .
I cannot so disclaim
Heaven's gift, nor call it other than it is!
She loves me!
[*Looking at the* Prince's *papers.*] — Which love, these, perchance, forbid.
Can I decide against myself — pronounce
She is the Duchess and no mate for me?
— Cleves, help me! Teach me, — every haggard face, —
To sorrow and endure! I will do right
Whatever be the issue. Help me, Cleves!

## ACT IV.

EVENING.

Scene. — *An Antechamber.*

*Enter the* Courtiers.

*Maufroy.* Now, then, that we may speak — how spring this mine?

*Gaucelme.* Is Guibert ready for its match? He cools!
Not so friend Valence with the Duchess there!
"Stay, Valence! Are not you my better self?"
And her cheek mantled —

*Guibert.* Well, she loves him, sir:

And more, — since you will have it I grow cool, —
She 's right : he 's worth it.
*Gaucelme.* For his deeds to-day ?
Say so !
*Guibert.* What should I say beside ?
*Gaucelme.* Not this —
For friendship's sake leave this for me to say —
That we 're the dupes of an egregious cheat !
This plain unpractised suitor, who found way
To the Duchess through the merest die's turn-up
A year ago, had seen her and been seen,
Loved and been loved.
*Guibert.* Impossible!
*Gaucelme.* — Nor say,
How sly and exquisite a trick, moreover,
Was this which — taking not their stand on facts
Boldly, for that had been endurable,
But worming on their way by craft, they choose
Resort to, rather, — and which you and we,
Sheep-like, assist them in the playing-off!
The Duchess thus parades him as preferred,
Not on the honest ground of preference,
Seeing first, liking more, and there an end —
But as we all had started equally,
And at the close of a fair race he proved
The only valiant, sage and loyal man.
Herself, too, with the pretty fits and starts, —
The careless, winning, candid ignorance
Of what the Prince might challenge or forego —
She had a hero in reserve ! What risk
Ran she ? This deferential easy Prince
Who brings his claims for her to ratify
— He 's just her puppet for the nonce ! You 'll see, —
Valence pronounces, as is equitable,

Against him : off goes the confederate :
As equitably, Valence takes her hand !
*The Chancellor.* You run too fast : her hand, no subject takes.
Do not our archives hold her father's will ?
That will provides against such accident,
And gives next heir, Prince Berthold, the reversion
Of Juliers, which she forfeits, wedding so.
*Gaucelme.* I know that, well as you, — but does the Prince ?
Knows Berthold, think you, that this plan, he helps,
For Valence's ennoblement, — would end,
If crowned with the success which seems its due,
In making him the very thing he plays,
The actual Duke of Juliers ? All agree
That Colombe's title waived or set aside,
He is next heir.
*The Chancellor.* Incontrovertibly.
*Gaucelme.* Guibert, your match, now, to the train !
*Guibert.* Enough !
I'm with you : selfishness is best again.
I thought of turning honest — what a dream !
Let's wake now !
*Gaucelme.* Selfish, friend, you never were :
'T was but a series of revenges taken
On your unselfishness for prospering ill.
But now that you're grown wiser, what's our course ?
*Guibert.* — Wait, I suppose, till Valence weds our lady,
And then, if we must needs revenge ourselves,
Apprise the Prince.
*Gaucelme.* — The Prince, ere then dismissed
With thanks for playing his mock part so well ?
Tell the Prince now, sir ! Ay, this very night,

Ere he accepts his dole and goes his way,
Explain how such a marriage makes him Duke,
Then trust his gratitude for the surprise!
*Guibert.* — Our lady wedding Valence all the same
As if the penalty were undisclosed?
Good! If she loves, she'll not disown her love,
Throw Valence up. I wonder you see that.
*Gaucelme.* The shame of it — the suddenness and shame!
Within her, the inclining heart — without,
A terrible array of witnesses —
And Valence by, to keep her to her word,
With Berthold's indignation or disgust!
We'll try it! — Not that we can venture much.
Her confidence we've lost forever: Berthold's
Is all to gain.
*Guibert.* To-night, then, venture we!
Yet — if lost confidence might be renewed?
*Gaucelme.* Never in noble natures! With the base ones, —
Twist off the crab's claw, wait a smarting-while,
And something grows and grows and gets to be
A mimic of the lost joint, just so like
As keeps in mind it never, never will
Replace its predecessor! Crabs do that:
But lop the lion's foot — and . . .
*Guibert.* To the Prince!
*Gaucelme* [*aside*]. And come what will to the lion's foot, I pay you,
My cat's-paw, as I long have yearned to pay.
[*Aloud.*] Footsteps! Himself! 'T is Valence breaks on us,
Exulting that their scheme succeeds. We'll hence —

And perfect ours! Consult the archives, first —
Then, fortified with knowledge, seek the Hall!
*Clugnet* [*to* GAUCELME *as they retire*]. You have not smiled so since your father died!

*As they retire, enter* VALENCE *with papers.*

*Valence.* So must it be! I have examined these
With scarce a palpitating heart — so calm,
Keeping her image almost wholly off,
Setting upon myself determined watch,
Repelling to the uttermost his claims:
And the result is — all men would pronounce
And not I, only, the result to be —
Berthold is heir; she has no shade of right
To the distinction which divided us,
But, suffered to rule first, I know not why,
Her rule connived at by those Kings and Popes,
To serve some devil's-purpose, — now 'tis gained,
Whate'er it was, the rule expires as well.
— Valence, this rapture . . . selfish can it be?
Eject it from your heart, her home! — It stays!
Ah, the brave world that opens on us both!
— Do my poor townsmen so esteem it? Cleves, —
I need not your pale faces! This, reward
For service done to you? Too horrible!
I never served you: 'twas myself I served —
Nay, served not — rather saved from punishment
Which, had I failed you then, would plague me now.
My life continues yours, and your life, mine.
But if, to take God's gift, I swerve no step —
Cleves! If I breathe no prayer for it — if she,
[*Footsteps without.*
Colombe, that comes now, freely gives herself —

Will Cleves require, that, turning thus to her,
I . . .

*Enter* Prince BERTHOLD.

Pardon, sir! I did not look for you
Till night, i' the Hall; nor have as yet declared
My judgment to the lady.
*Berthold.* So I hoped.
*Valence.* And yet I scarcely know why that should check
The frank disclosure of it first to you —
What her right seems, and what, in consequence,
She will decide on.
*Berthold.* That I need not ask.
*Valence.* You need not: I have proved the lady's mind:
And, justice being to do, dare act for her.
*Berthold.* Doubtless she has a very noble mind.
*Valence.* Oh, never fear but she 'll in each conjuncture
Bear herself bravely! She no whit depends
On circumstance; as she adorns a throne,
She had adorned . . .
*Berthold.* A cottage — in what book
Have I read that, of every queen that lived?
A throne! You have not been instructed, sure,
To forestall my request?
*Valence.* 'T is granted, sir!
My heart instructs me. I have scrutinized
Your claims . . .
*Berthold.* Ah — claims, you mean, at first preferred?
I come, before the hour appointed me,
To pray you let those claims at present rest,
In favour of a new and stronger one.

*Valence.* You shall not need a stronger: on the part
O' the lady, all you offer I accept,
Since one clear right suffices : yours is clear.
Propose !
*Berthold.* I offer her my hand.
*Valence.* Your hand ?
*Berthold.* A Duke's, yourself say ; and, at no far time,
Something here whispers me — an Emperor's.
The lady's mind is noble : which induced
This seizure of occasion ere my claims
Were — settled, let us amicably say !
*Valence.* Your hand !
*Berthold.* (He will fall down and kiss it next !)
Sir, this astonishment 's too flattering,
Nor must you hold your mistress' worth so cheap.
Enhance it, rather, — urge that blood is blood —
The daughter of the Burgraves, Landgraves, Markgraves,
Remains their daughter ! I shall scarce gainsay.
Elsewhere or here, the lady needs must rule :
Like the imperial crown's great chrysoprase,
They talk of — somewhat out of keeping there,
And yet no jewel for a meaner cap.
*Valence.* You wed the Duchess ?
*Berthold.* Cry you mercy, friend !
Will the match also influence fortunes here ?
A natural solicitude enough.
Be certain, no bad chance it proves for you !
However high you take your present stand,
There 's prospect of a higher still remove —
For Juliers will not be my resting-place,
And, when I have to choose a substitute

To rule the little burgh, I 'll think of you
Who need not give your mates a character.
And yet I doubt your fitness to supplant
The gray smooth Chamberlain : he 'd hesitate
A doubt his lady could demean herself
So low as to accept me. Courage, sir!
I like your method better : feeling's play
Is franker much, and flatters me beside.
*Valence.* I am to say, you love her ?
*Berthold.* Say that too!
Love has no great concernment, thinks the world,
With a Duke's marriage. How go precedents
In Juliers' story — how use Juliers' Dukes ?
I see you have them here in goodly row ;
Yon must be Luitpold — ay, a stalwart sire !
Say, I have been arrested suddenly
In my ambition's course, its rocky course,
By this sweet flower : I fain would gather it
And then proceed : so say and speedily
—(Nor stand there like Duke Luitpold's brazen self!)
Enough, sir : you possess my mind, I think.
This is my claim, the others being withdrawn,
And to this be it that, i' the Hall to-night,
Your lady's answer comes ; till when, farewell!
[*He retires.*
*Valence* [*after a pause*]. The heavens and earth stay as they were ; my heart
Beats as it beat : the truth remains the truth.
What falls away, then, if not faith in her ?
Was it my faith, that she could estimate
Love's value, and, such faith still guiding me,
Dare I now test her ? Or grew faith so strong
Solely because no power of test was mine ?

*Enter the* Duchess.

*The Duchess.* My fate, sir! Ah, you turn away.
All 's over.
But you are sorry for me? Be not so!
What I might have become, and never was,
Regret with me! What I have merely been,
Rejoice I am no longer! What I seem
Beginning now, in my new state, to be,
Hope that I am! — for, once my rights proved void,
This heavy roof seems easy to exchange
For the blue sky outside — my lot henceforth.
*Valence.* And what a lot is Berthold's!
*The Duchess.* How of him?
*Valence.* He gathers earth's whole good into his arms;
Standing, as man now, stately, strong and wise,
Marching to fortune, not surprised by her.
One great aim, like a guiding-star, above —
Which tasks strength, wisdom, stateliness, to lift
His manhood to the height that takes the prize;
A prize not near — lest overlooking earth
He rashly spring to seize it — nor remote,
So that he rest upon his path content:
But day by day, while shimmering grows shine,
And the faint circlet prophesies the orb,
He sees so much as, just evolving these,
The stateliness, the wisdom and the strength,
To due completion, will suffice this life,
And lead him at his grandest to the grave.
After this star, out of a night he springs;
A beggar's cradle for the throne of thrones
He quits; so, mounting, feels each step he mounts,
Nor, as from each to each exultingly

He passes, overleaps one grade of joy.
This, for his own good: — with the world, each gift
Of God and man, — reality, tradition,
Fancy and fact — so well environ him,
That as a mystic panoply they serve —
Of force, untenanted, to awe mankind,
And work his purpose out with half the world,
While he, their master, dexterously slipt
From such encumbrance, is meantime employed
With his own prowess on the other half.
Thus shall he prosper, every day's success
Adding, to what is he, a solid strength —
An aëry might to what encircles him,
Till at the last, so life's routine lends help,
That as the Emperor only breathes and moves,
His shadow shall be watched, his step or stalk
Become a comfort or a portent, how
He trails his ermine take significance, —
Till even his power shall cease to be most power,
And men shall dread his weakness more, nor dare
Peril their earth its bravest, first and best,
Its typified invincibility.
Thus shall he go on, greatening, till he ends —
The man of men, the spirit of all flesh,
The fiery centre of an earthly world!

*The Duchess.* Some such a fortune I had dreamed should rise
Out of my own — that is, above my power
Seemed other, greater potencies to stretch —

*Valence.* For you?

*The Duchess.* It was not I moved there, I think:
But one I could, — though constantly beside,
And aye approaching, — still keep distant from,
And so adore. 'T was a man moved there.

*Valence.* Who?
*The Duchess.* I felt the spirit, never saw the face.
*Valence.* See it! 'Tis Berthold's! He enables you
To realize your vision.
*The Duchess.* Berthold?
*Valence.* Duke —
Emperor to be: he proffers you his hand.
*The Duchess.* Generous and princely!
*Valence.* He is all of this.
*The Duchess.* Thanks, Berthold, for my father's sake! No hand
Degrades me.
*Valence.* You accept the proffered hand?
*The Duchess.* That he should love me!
*Valence.* "Loved" I did not say.
Had that been — love might so incline the Prince
To the world's good, the world that 's at his foot, —
I do not know, this moment, I should dare
Desire that you refused the world — and Cleves — 270
The sacrifice he asks.
*The Duchess.* Not love me, sir?
*Valence.* He scarce affirmed it.
*The Duchess.* May not deeds affirm?
*Valence.* What does he? . . . Yes, yes, very much he does!
All the shame saved, he thinks, and sorrow saved —
Immitigable sorrow, so he thinks, —
Sorrow that 's deeper than we dream, perchance.
*The Duchess.* Is not this love?
*Valence.* So very much he does!
For look, you can descend now gracefully:
All doubts are banished, that the world might have,
Or worst, the doubts yourself, in after-time, 280

May call up of your heart's sincereness now.
To such, reply, "I could have kept my rule —
Increased it to the utmost of my dreams —
Yet I abjured it." This, he does for you:
It is munificently much.
*The Duchess.* Still "much"!
But why is it not love, sir? Answer me!
*Valence.* Because not one of Berthold's words and looks
Had gone with love's presentment of a flower
To the beloved: because bold confidence,
Open superiority, free pride —
Love owns not, yet were all that Berthold owned:
Because where reason, even, finds no flaw,
Unerringly a lover's instinct may.
*The Duchess.* You reason, then, and doubt?
*Valence.* I love, and know.
*The Duchess.* You love? How strange! I never cast a thought
On that. Just see our selfishness! You seemed
So much my own . . . I had no ground — and yet,
I never dreamed another might divide
My power with you, much less exceed it.
*Valence.* Lady,
I am yours wholly.
*The Duchess.* Oh, no, no, not mine!
'T is not the same now, nevermore can be.
— Your first love, doubtless. Well, what 's gone from me?
What have I lost in you?
*Valence.* My heart replies —
No loss there! So, to Berthold back again:
This offer of his hand, he bids me make —
Its obvious magnitude is well to weigh.

*The Duchess.* She 's . . . yes, she must be very fair for you !
*Valence.* I am a simple advocate of Cleves.
*The Duchess.* You ! With the heart and brain that so helped me,
I fancied them exclusively my own,
Yet find are subject to a stronger sway !
She must be . . . tell me, is she very fair ?
*Valence.* Most fair, beyond conception or belief.
*The Duchess.* Black eyes ? — no matter ! Colombe, the world leads
Its life without you, whom your friends professed
The only woman : see how true they spoke !
One lived this while, who never saw your face,
Nor heard your voice — unless . . . Is she from Cleves ?
*Valence.* Cleves knows her well.
*The Duchess.* Ah — just a fancy, now !
When you poured forth the wrongs of Cleves, — I said,
— Thought, that is, afterward . . .
*Valence.* You thought of me ?
*The Duchess.* Of whom else ? Only such great cause, I thought,
For such effect : see what true love can do !
Cleves is his love. I almost fear to ask
. . . And will not. This is idling : to our work !
Admit before the Prince, without reserve,
My claims misgrounded ; then may follow better
. . . When you poured out Cleves' wrongs impetuously,
Was she in your mind ?
*Valence.* All done was done for her
— To humble me !
*The Duchess.* She will be proud at least.
*Valence.* She ?

*The Duchess.* When you tell her.
*Valence.* That will never be.
*The Duchess.* How — are there sweeter things you hope to tell?
No, sir! You counselled me, — I counsel you
In the one point I — any woman — can.
Your worth, the first thing; let her own come next —
Say what you did through her, and she through you —
The praises of her beauty afterward!
Will you?
*Valence.* I dare not.
*The Duchess.* Dare not?
*Valence.* She I love
Suspects not such a love in me.
*The Duchess.* You jest.
*Valence.* The lady is above me and away.
Not only the brave form, and the bright mind,
And the great heart, combine to press me low —
But all the world calls rank divides us.
*The Duchess.* Rank!
Now grant me patience! Here's a man declares
Oracularly in another's case —
Sees the true value and the false, for them —
Nay, bids them see it, and they straight do see.
You called my court's love worthless — so it turned:
I threw away as dross my heap of wealth,
And here you stickle for a piece or two!
First — has she seen you?
*Valence.* Yes.
*The Duchess.* She loves you, then.
*Valence.* One flash of hope burst; then succeeded night:
And all 's at darkest now. Impossible!

*The Duchess.* We 'll try : you are — so to speak
— my subject yet ?
*Valence.* As ever — to the death.
*The Duchess.* Obey me, then !
*Valence.* I must.
*The Duchess.* Approach her, and . . . no ! first of all
Get more assurance. " My instructress," say,
" Was great, descended from a line of kings,
And even fair " — (wait why I say this folly) —
" She said, of all men, none for eloquence,
Courage, and (what cast even these to shade)
The heart they sprung from, — none deserved like him
Who saved her at her need : if she said this,
What should not one I love, say ? "
*Valence.* Heaven — this hope —
Oh, lady, you are filling me with fire !
*The Duchess.* Say this ! — nor think I bid you cast
aside
One touch of all the awe and reverence ;
Nay, make her proud for once to heart's content
That all this wealth of heart and soul 's her own !
Think you are all of this, — and, thinking it,
. . . (Obey !)
*Valence.* I cannot choose.
*The Duchess.* Then, kneel to her!
[VALENCE *sinks on his knee.*
I dream !
*Valence.* Have mercy ! Yours, unto the death, —
I have obeyed. Despise, and let me die !
*The Duchess.* Alas, sir, is it to be ever thus ?
Even with you as with the world ? I know
This morning's service was no vulgar deed
Whose motive, once it dares avow itself,
Explains all done and infinitely more,

So, takes the shelter of a nobler cause.
Your service named its true source, — loyalty!
The rest's unsaid again. The Duchess bids you,
Rise, sir! The Prince's words were in debate.
*Valence* [*rising*]. Rise? Truth, as ever, lady, comes from you!
I should rise — I who spoke for Cleves, can speak
For Man — yet tremble now, who stood firm then.
I laughed — for 't was past tears — that Cleves should starve
With all hearts beating loud the infamy,
And no tongue daring trust as much to air:
Yet here, where all hearts speak, shall I be mute?
Oh, lady, for your own sake look on me!
On all I am, and have, and do — heart, brain,
Body and soul, — this Valence and his gifts!
I was proud once: I saw you, and they sank,
So that each, magnified a thousand times,
Were nothing to you — but such nothingness,
Would a crown gild it, or a sceptre prop,
A treasure speed, a laurel-wreath enhance?
What is my own desert? But should your love
Have . . . there 's no language helps here . . . singled me, —
Then — oh, that wild word "then!" — be just to love,
In generosity its attribute!
Love, since you pleased to love! All 's cleared — a stage
For trial of the question kept so long:
Judge you — Is love or vanity the best?
You, solve it for the world's sake — you, speak first
What all will shout one day — you, vindicate
Our earth and be its angel! All is said.

Lady, I offer nothing — I am yours:
But, for the cause' sake, look on me and him,
And speak!

*The Duchess.* I have received the Prince's message:
Say, I prepare my answer!

*Valence.* Take me, Cleves!
[*He withdraws.*

*The Duchess.* Mournful — that nothing 's what it calls itself!
Devotion, zeal, faith, loyalty — mere love!
And, love in question, what may Berthold's be?
I did ill to mistrust the world so soon:
Already was this Berthold at my side.
The valley-level has its hawks no doubt:
May not the rock-top have its eagles, too?
Yet Valence . . . let me see his rival then!

## ACT V.

NIGHT.

SCENE. — *The Hall.*

*Enter* BERTHOLD *and* MELCHIOR.

*Melchior.* And here you wait the matter's issue?

*Berthold.* Here.

*Melchior.* I don't regret I shut Amelius, then.
But tell me, on this grand disclosure, — how
Behaved our spokesman with the forehead?

*Berthold.* Oh,
Turned out no better than the foreheadless —
Was dazzled not so very soon, that 's all!
For my part, this is scarce the hasty showy

Chivalrous measure you give me credit of.
Perhaps I had a fancy, — but 'tis gone.
— Let her commence the unfriended innocent
And carry wrongs about from court to court?
No, truly! The least shake of fortune's sand,
— My uncle-Pope chokes in a coughing fit,
King-cousin takes a fancy to blue eyes, —
And wondrously her claims would brighten up;
Forth comes a new gloss on the ancient law,
O'er-looked provisoes, o'er-past premises,
Follow in plenty. No: 't is the safe step.
The hour beneath the convent-wall is lost:
Juliers and she, once mine, are ever mine.

*Melchior.* Which is to say, you, losing heart already,
Elude the adventure.

*Berthold.* Not so — or, if so —
Why not confess at once that I advise
None of our kingly craft and guild just now
To lay, one moment, down their privilege
With the notion they can any time at pleasure
Retake it: that may turn out hazardous.
We seem, in Europe, pretty well at end
O' the night, with our great masque: those favored few
Who keep the chamber's top, and honor's chance
Of the early evening, may retain their place
And figure as they list till out of breath.
But it is growing late: and I observe
A dim grim kind of tipstaves at the doorway
Not only bar new-comers entering now,
But caution those who left, for any cause,
And would return, that morning draws too near;
The ball must die off, shut itself up. We —
I think, may dance lights out and sunshine in,
And sleep off headache on our frippery:

But friend the other, who cunningly stole out,
And, after breathing the fresh air outside,
Means to re-enter with a new costume,
Will be advised go back to bed, I fear.
I stick to privilege, on second thoughts.
*Melchior.* Yes — you evade the adventure: and, beside,
Give yourself out for colder than you are.
King Philip, only, notes the lady's eyes?
Don't they come in for somewhat of the motive
With you too?
*Berthold.* Yes — no: I am past that now.
Gone 't is: I cannot shut my soul to fact.
Of course, I might by forethought and contrivance
Reason myself into a rapture. Gone:
And something better come instead, no doubt.
*Melchior.* So be it! Yet, all the same, proceed my way,
Though to your ends; so shall you prosper best!
The lady, — to be won for selfish ends, —
Will be won easier my unselfish . . . call it,
Romantic way.
*Berthold.* Won easier?
*Melchior.* Will not she?
*Berthold.* There I profess humility without bound:
Ill cannot speed — not I — the Emperor.
*Melchior.* And I should think the Emperor best waived,
From your description of her mood and way.
You could look, if it pleased you, into hearts;
But are too indolent and fond of watching
Your own — you know that, for you study it.
*Berthold.* Had you but seen the orator her friend,
So bold and voluble an hour before,

Abashed to earth at aspect of the change!
Make her an Empress? Ah, that changed the case!
Oh, I read hearts! 'T is for my own behoof,
I court her with my true worth: wait the event!
I learned my final lesson on that head
When years ago, — my first and last essay —
Before the priest my uncle could by help
Of his superior, raise me from the dirt —
Priscilla left me for a Brabant lord
Whose cheek was like the topaz on his thumb.
I am past illusion on that score.
*Melchior.* Here comes
The lady —
*Berthold.* — And there you go. But do not! Give me
Another chance to please you! Hear me plead!
*Melchior.* You 'll keep, then, to the lover, to the man?

*Enter the* DUCHESS — *followed by* ADOLF *and* SABYNE *and, after an interval, by the* Courtiers.

*Berthold.* Good auspice to our meeting!
*The Duchess.* May it prove!
— And you, sir, will be Emperor one day?
*Berthold.* (Ay, that 's the point!) I may be Emperor.
*The Duchess.* 'T is not for my sake only, I am proud
Of this you offer: I am prouder far
That from the highest state should duly spring
The highest, since most generous, of deeds.
*Berthold.* (Generous — still that!) You underrate yourself.
You are, what I, to be complete, must gain —

Find now, and may not find, another time.
While I career on all the world for stage,
There needs at home my representative.
*The Duchess.* — Such, rather, would some warrior-woman be —
One dowered with lands and gold, or rich in friends —
One like yourself.
*Berthold.* Lady, I am myself,
And have all these: I want what's not myself,
Nor has all these. Why give one hand two swords?
Here's one already: be a friend's next gift
A silk glove, if you will — I have a sword.
*The Duchess.* You love me, then?
*Berthold.* Your lineage I revere,
Honor your virtue, in your truth believe,
Do homage to your intellect, and bow
Before your peerless beauty.
*The Duchess.* But, for love —
*Berthold.* A further love I do not understand.
Our best course is to say these hideous truths,
And see them, once said, grow endurable:
Like waters shuddering from their central bed,
Black with the midnight bowels of the earth,
That, once up-spouted by an earthquake's throe,
A portent and a terror — soon subside,
Freshen apace, take gold and rainbow hues
In sunshine, sleep in shadow, and at last
Grow common to the earth as hills or trees —
Accepted by all things they came to scare.
*The Duchess.* You cannot love, then?
*Berthold.* — Charlemagne, perhaps!
Are you not over-curious in love-lore?
*The Duchess.* I have become so, very recently.
It seems, then, I shall best deserve esteem,

Respect, and all your candor promises,
By putting on a calculating mood —
Asking the terms of my becoming yours ?
*Berthold.* Let me not do myself injustice, neither.
Because I will not condescend to fictions
That promise what my soul can ne'er acquit,
It does not follow that my guarded phrase
May not include far more of what you seek,
Than wide profession of less scrupulous men.
You will be Empress, once for all : with me
The Pope disputes supremacy — you stand,
And none gainsays, the earth's first woman.
*The Duchess.* That —
Or simple Lady of Ravestein again ?
*Berthold.* The matter 's not in my arbitrament :
Now I have made my claims — which I regret —
Cede one, cede all.
*The Duchess.* This claim then, you enforce ?
*Berthold.* The world looks on.
*The Duchess.* And when must I decide ?
*Berthold.* When, lady ? Have I said thus much so promptly
For nothing ? — Poured out, with such pains, at once
What I might else have suffered to ooze forth
Droplet by droplet in a lifetime long —
For aught less than as prompt an answer, too ?
All 's fairly told now : who can teach you more ?
*The Duchess.* I do not see him.
*Berthold.* I shall ne'er deceive.
This offer should be made befittingly
Did time allow the better setting forth
The good of it, with what is not so good,
Advantage, and disparagement as well :
But as it is, the sum of both must serve.

I am already weary of this place ;
My thoughts are next stage on to Rome. Decide !
The Empire — or, — not even Juliers now !
Hail to the Empress — farewell to the Duchess !
[*The* Courtiers, *who have been drawing nearer and nearer, interpose.*
*Gaucelme.* — "Farewell," Prince ? when we break in at our risk —
*Clugnet.* Almost upon court-license trespassing —
*Gaucelme.* — To point out how your claims are valid yet !
You know not, by the Duke her father's will,
The lady, if she weds beneath her rank,
Forfeits her Duchy in the next heir's favor —
So 't is expressly stipulate. And if
It can be shown 't is her intent to wed
A subject, then yourself, next heir, by right
Succeed to Juliers.
*Berthold.* What insanity ? —
*Guibert.* Sir, there 's one Valence, the pale fiery man
You saw and heard this morning — thought, no doubt,
Was of considerable standing here :
I put it to your penetration, Prince,
If aught save love, the truest love for her
Could make him serve the lady as he did !
He 's simply a poor advocate of Cleves
— Creeps here with difficulty, finds a place
With danger, gets in by a miracle,
And for the first time meets the lady's face —
So runs the story : is that credible ?
For, first — no sooner in, than he 's apprised
Fortunes have changed ; you are all-powerful here,
The lady as powerless : he stands fast by her !

*The Duchess* [*aside*]. And do such deeds spring
up from love alone?
*Guibert.* But here occurs the question, does the lady
Love him again? I say, how else can she?
Can she forget how he stood singly forth
In her defence, dared outrage all of us,
Insult yourself — for what, save love's reward.
*The Duchess* [*aside*]. And is love then the sole
reward of love?
*Guibert.* But, love him as she may and must —
you ask,
Means she to wed him? "Yes," both natures
answer!
Both, in their pride, point out the sole result;
Naught less would he accept nor she propose.
For each conjecture was she great enough
— Will be, for this.
*Clugnet.* Though, now that this is known,
Policy, doubtless, urges she deny . . .
*The Duchess.* — What, sir, and wherefore? — since
I am not sure
That all is any other than you say!
You take this Valence, hold him close to me,
Him with his actions: can I choose but look?
I am not sure, love trulier shows itself
Than in this man, you hate and would degrade,
Yet, with your worst abatement, show me thus.
Nor am I — (thus made look within myself,
Ere I had dared) — now that the look is dared —
Sure that I do not love him!
*Guibert.* Hear you, Prince?
*Berthold.* And what, sirs, please you, may this
prattle mean
Unless to prove with what alacrity

You give your lady's secrets to the world?
How much indebted, for discovering
That quality, you make me, will be found
When there 's a keeper for my own to seek.
*Courtiers.* "Our lady?"
*Berthold.* — She assuredly remains.
*The Duchess.* Ah, Prince — and you too can be generous?
You could renounce your power, if this were so,
And let me, as these phrase it, wed my love
Yet keep my Duchy? You perhaps exceed
Him, even, in disinterestedness!
*Berthold.* How, lady, should all this affect my purpose?
Your will and choice are still as ever, free.
Say, you have known a worthier than myself
In mind and heart, of happier form and face —
Others must have their birthright: I have gifts,
To balance theirs, not blot them out of sight.
Against a hundred alien qualities,
I lay the prize I offer. I am nothing:
Wed you the Empire?
*The Duchess.* And my heart away?
*Berthold.* When have I made pretension to your heart?
I give none. I shall keep your honor safe;
With mine I trust you, as the sculptor trusts
Yon marble woman with the marble rose,
Loose on her hand, she never will let fall,
In graceful, slight, silent security.
You will be proud of my world-wide career,
And I content in you the fair and good.
What were the use of planting a few seeds
The thankless climate never would mature —

Affections all repelled by circumstance?
Enough: to these no credit I attach, —
To what you own, find nothing to object.
Write simply on my requisition's face
What shall content my friends — that you admit,
As Colombe of Ravestein, the claims therein,
Or never need admit them, as my wife —
And either way, all 's ended!

*The Duchess.* Let all end!

*Berthold.* The requisition!

*Guibert.* — Valence holds, of course!

*Berthold.* Desire his presence! [ADOLF *goes out.*

*Courtiers* [*to each other*]. Out it all comes yet;
He 'll have his word against the bargain yet;
He 's not the man to tamely acquiesce.
One passionate appeal — upbraiding even,
May turn the tide again. Despair not yet!

[*They retire a little.*

*Berthold* [*to* MELCHIOR]. The Empire has its old success, my friend!

*Melchior.* You 've had your way: before the spokesman speaks,
Let me, but this once, work a problem out,
And evermore be dumb! The Empire wins?
To better purpose have I read my books!

*Enter* VALENCE.

*Melchior* [*to the* Courtiers]. Apart, my masters!
[*To* VALENCE.] Sir, one word with you!
I am a poor dependent of the Prince's —
Pitched on to speak, as of slight consequence.
You are no higher, I find: in other words,
We two, as probably the wisest here,

Need not hold diplomatic talk like fools.
Suppose I speak, divesting the plain fact
Of all their tortuous phrases, fit for them?
Do you reply so, and what trouble saved!
The Prince, then — an embroiled strange heap of news
This moment reaches him — if true or false,
All dignity forbids he should inquire
In person, or by worthier deputy;
Yet somehow must inquire, lest slander come:
And so, 't is I am pitched on. You have heard
His offer to your lady?
*Valence.* Yes.
*Melchior.* — Conceive
Her joy thereat?
*Valence.* I cannot.
*Melchior.* No one can.
All draws to a conclusion, therefore.
*Valence* [*aside*]. So!
No after-judgment — no first thought revised —
Her first and last decision! — me, she leaves,
Takes him; a simple heart is flung aside,
The ermine o'er a heartless breast embraced.
Oh Heaven, this mockery has been played too oft!
Once, to surprise the angels — twice, that fiends
Recording, might be proud they chose not so —
Thrice, many thousand times, to teach the world
All men should pause, misdoubt their strength, since men
Can have such chance yet fail so signally,
— But ever, ever this farewell to Heaven,
Welcome to earth — this taking death for life —
This spurning love and kneeling to the world —
Oh Heaven, it is too often and too old!

*Melchior.* Well, on this point, what but an absurd rumor
Arises — these, its source — its subject, you!
Your faith and loyalty misconstruing,
They say, your service claims the lady's hand!
Of course, nor Prince nor lady can respond:
Yet something must be said: for, were it true
You made such claim, the Prince would . . .
*Valence.* Well, sir, — would?
*Melchior.* — Not only probably withdraw his suit,
But, very like, the lady might be forced
Accept your own. Oh, there are reasons why!
But you 'll excuse at present all save one, —
I think so. What we want is, your own witness,
For, or against — her good, or yours: decide!
*Valence* [*aside*]. Be it her good if she accounts it so!
[*After a contest.*] For what am I but hers, to choose as she?
Who knows how far, beside, the light from her
May reach, and dwell with, what she looks upon?
*Melchior* [*to the* Prince]. Now to him, you!
*Berthold* [*to* VALENCE]. My friend acquaints you, sir,
The noise runs . . .
*Valence.* — Prince, how fortunate are you,
Wedding her as you will, in spite of noise,
To show belief in love! Let her but love you,
All else you disregard! What else can be?
You know how love is incompatible
With falsehood — purifies, assimilates
All other passions to itself.
*Melchior.* Ay, sir:
But softly! Where, in the object we select,
Such love is, perchance, wanting?

*Valence.* Then indeed,
What is it you can take?
*Melchior.* Nay, ask the world!
Youth, beauty, virtue, an illustrious name,
An influence o'er mankind.
*Valence.* When man perceives . . .
— Ah, I can only speak as for myself!
*The Duchess.* Speak for yourself!
*Valence.* May I? — no, I have spoken,
And time 's gone by. Had I seen such an one,
As I loved her — weighing thoroughly that word —
So should my task be to evolve her love:
If for myself! — if for another — well.
*Berthold.* Heroic truly! And your sole reward,—
The secret pride in yielding up love's right?
*Valence.* Who thought upon reward? And yet how much
Comes after — oh, what amplest recompense!
Is the knowledge of her, naught? the memory, naught?
— Lady, should such an one have looked on you,
Ne'er wrong yourself so far as quote the world
And say, love can go unrequited here!
You will have blessed him to his whole life's end —
Low passions hindered, baser cares kept back,
All goodness cherished where you dwelt — and dwell.
What would he have? He holds you — you, both form
And mind, in his, — where self-love makes such room
For love of you, he would not serve you now
The vulgar way, — repulse your enemies,
Win you new realms, or best, to save the old
Die blissfully — that 's past so long ago!
He wishes you no need, thought, care of him —
Your good, by any means, himself unseen,

Away, forgotten ! — He gives that life's task up,
As it were . . . but this charge which I return —
[*Offers the requisition, which she takes.*
Wishing your good.
*The Duchess* [*having subscribed it*]. And opportunely, sir —
Since at a birthday's close, like this of mine,
Good wishes gentle deeds reciprocate.
Most on a wedding-day, as mine is too,
Should gifts be thought of : yours comes first by right.
Ask of me !
*Berthold.* He shall have whate'er he asks,
For your sake and his own.
*Valence* [*aside*]. If I should ask —
The withered bunch of flowers she wears — perhaps,
One last touch of her hand, I nevermore
Shall see !
[*After a pause, presenting his paper to the* Prince.
Cleves' Prince, redress the wrongs of Cleves !
*Berthold.* I will, sir !
*The Duchess* [*as* VALENCE *prepares to retire*]. — Nay, do out your duty, first !
You bore this paper ; I have registered
My answer to it : read it and have done !
[VALENCE *reads it.*
I take him — give up Juliers and the world.
This is my Birthday.
*Melchior.* Berthold, my one hero
Of the world she gives up, one friend worth my books,
Sole man I think it pays the pains to watch, —
Speak, for I know you through your Popes and Kings !
*Berthold* [*after a pause*]. Lady, well rewarded ! Sir, as well deserved !
I could not imitate — I hardly envy —

I do admire you. All is for the best.
Too costly a flower were this, I see it now,
To pluck and set upon my barren helm
To wither — any garish plume will do.
I 'll not insult you and refuse your Duchy —
You can so well afford to yield it me,
And I were left, without it, sadly lorn.
As it is — for me — if that will flatter you,
A somewhat wearier life seems to remain
Than I thought possible where . . . 'faith, their life
Begins already ! They 're too occupied
To listen : and few words content me best.
[*Abruptly to the* Courtiers.] I am your Duke, though !
Who obey me here ?
*The Duchess.* Adolf and Sabyne follow us —
*Guibert* [*starting from the* Courtiers]. — And I ?
Do I not follow them, if I may n't you ?
Shall not I get some little duties up
At Ravestein and emulate the rest ?
God save you, Gaucelme ! 'T is my Birthday, too !
*Berthold.* You happy handful that remain with me
. . . That is, with Dietrich the black Barnabite
I shall leave over you — will earn your wages
Or Dietrich has forgot to ply his trade !
Meantime, — go copy me the precedents
Of every installation, proper styles
And pedigrees of all your Juliers' Dukes —
While I prepare to plod on my old way,
And somewhat wearily, I must confess !
*The Duchess* [*with a light joyous laugh as she turns from them*]. Come, Valence, to our friends, God's earth . . .
*Valence* [*as she falls into his arms*]. — And thee !

# LURIA;

## A TRAGEDY.

1846.

I DEDICATE THIS LAST ATTEMPT FOR THE PRESENT AT DRAMATIC POETRY TO A GREAT DRAMATIC POET; "WISHING WHAT I WRITE MAY BE READ BY HIS LIGHT:" IF A PHRASE ORIGINALLY ADDRESSED, BY NOT THE LEAST WORTHY OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES, TO SHAKESPEARE, MAY BE APPLIED HERE, BY ONE WHOSE SOLE PRIVILEGE IS IN A GRATEFUL ADMIRATION,

To WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

LONDON: 1846.

*PERSONS.*

LURIA, *a Moor, Commander of the Florentine Forces.*
HUSAIN, *a Moor, his friend.*
PUCCIO, *the old Florentine Commander, now* LURIA'S *chief officer.*
BRACCIO, *Commissary of the Republic of Florence.*
JACOPO (LAPO), *his secretary.*
TIBURZIO, *Commander of the Pisans.*
DOMIZIA, *a noble Florentine lady.*

SCENE. — LURIA'S *Camp between Florence and Pisa.*

TIME, 14—.

## ACT I.

MORNING.

BRACCIO, *as dictating to his* Secretary; PUCCIO *standing by.*

*Braccio* [*to* PUCCIO]. Then, you join battle in an hour?

*Puccio.* Not I;
Luria, the captain.
*Braccio* [*to the* Secretary]. "In an hour, the battle."
[*To* Puccio.] Sir, let your eye run o'er this loose digest,
And see if very much of your report
Have slipped away through my civilian phrase.
Does this instruct the Signory aright
How army stands with army?
*Puccio* [*taking the paper*]. All seems here:
— That Luria, seizing with our city's force
The several points of vantage, hill and plain,
Shuts Pisa safe from help on every side,
And, baffling the Lucchese arrived too late,
Must, in the battle he delivers now,
Beat her best troops and first of chiefs.
*Braccio.* So sure?
Tiburzio's a consummate captain too!
*Puccio.* Luria holds Pisa's fortune in his hand.
*Braccio* [*to the* Secretary]. "The Signory hold Pisa in their hand."
Your own proved soldiership's our warrant, sir:
So, while my secretary ends his task,
Have out two horsemen, by the open roads,
To post with it to Florence!
*Puccio* [*returning the paper*]. All seems here;
Unless . . . Ser Braccio, 't is my last report!
Since Pisa's outbreak, and my overthrow,
And Luria's hastening at the city's call
To save her, as he only could, no doubt;
Till now that she is saved or sure to be, —
Whatever you tell Florence, I tell you:
Each day's note you, her Commissary, make

Of Luria's movements, I myself supply.
No youngster am I longer, to my cost;
Therefore while Florence gloried in her choice
And vaunted Luria, whom but Luria, still,
As if zeal, courage, prudence, conduct, faith,
Had never met in any man before,
I saw no pressing need to swell the cry.
But now, this last report and I have done:
So, ere to-night comes with its roar of praise,
'T were not amiss if some one old i' the trade
Subscribed with, "True, for once rash counsel's best.
This Moor of the bad faith and doubtful race,
This boy to whose untried sagacity,
Raw valor, Florence trusts without reserve
The charge to save her, — justifies her choice;
In no point has this stranger failed his friends.
Now praise!" I say this, and it is not here.
*Braccio* [*to the* Secretary]. Write, "Puccio, superseded in the charge,
By Luria, bears full witness to his worth,
And no reward our Signory can give
Their champion but he 'll back it cheerfully."
Aught more? Five minutes hence, both messengers!
[Puccio *goes.*
*Braccio* [*after a pause, and while he slowly tears the paper into shreds*]. I think . . . (pray God, I hold in fit contempt
This warfare's noble art and ordering,
And, — once the brace of prizers fairly matched,
Poleaxe with poleaxe, knife with knife as good, —
Spit properly at what men term their skill! — )
Yet here I think our fighter has the odds.
With Pisa's strength diminished thus and thus,
Such points of vantage in our hands and such,

Lucca still off the stage, too, — all 's assured :
Luria must win this battle. Write the Court,
That Luria's trial end and sentence pass !
*Secretary.* Patron, —
*Braccio.* Ay, Lapo ?
*Secretary.* If you trip, I fall ;
'T is in self-interest I speak —
*Braccio.* Nay, nay,
You overshoot the mark, my Lapo ! Nay !
When did I say pure love 's impossible ?
I make you daily write those red cheeks thin,
Load your young brow with what concerns it least,
And, when we visit Florence, let you pace
The Piazza by my side as if we talked,
Where all your old acquaintances may see :
You 'd die for me, I should not be surprised.
Now then !
*Secretary.* Sir, look about and love yourself!
Step after step, the Signory and you
Tread gay till this tremendous point 's to pass ;
Which pass not, pass not, ere you ask yourself, —
Bears the brain steadily such draughts of fire,
Or too delicious may not prove the pride
Of this long secret trial you dared plan,
Dare execute, you solitary here,
With the gray-headed toothless fools at home,
Who think themselves your lords, such slaves are they ?
If they pronounce this sentence as you bid,
Declare the treason, claim its penalty, —
And sudden out of all the blaze of life,
On the best minute of his brightest day,
From that adoring army at his back,
Thro' Florence' joyous crowds before his face,
Into the dark you beckon Luria . . .

*Braccio.* Then —
Why, Lapo, when the fighting-people vaunt,
We of the other craft and mystery,
May we not smile demure, the danger past?
*Secretary.* Sir, no, no, no, — the danger, and your spirit
At watch and ward? Where 's danger on your part,
With that thin flitting instantaneous steel
'Gainst the blind bull-front of a brute-force world?
If Luria, that 's to perish sure as fate,
Should have been really guiltless after all?
*Braccio.* Ah, you have thought that?
*Secretary.* Here I sit, your scribe,
And in and out goes Luria, days and nights;
This Puccio comes; the Moor his other friend,
Husain; they talk — that 's all feigned easily;
He speaks (I would not listen if I could),
Reads, orders, counsels: — but he rests sometimes, —
I see him stand and eat, sleep stretched an hour
On the lynx-skins yonder; hold his bared black arms
Into the sun from the tent-opening; laugh
When his horse drops the forage from his teeth
And neighs to hear him hum his Moorish songs.
That man believes in Florence, as the saint
Tied to the wheel believes in God.
*Braccio.* How strange!
You too have thought that!
*Secretary.* Do but you think too,
And all is saved! I only have to write,
"The man seemed false awhile, proves true at last,
Bury it" — so I write the Signory —
"Bury this trial in your breast forever,
Blot it from things or done or dreamed about!
So Luria shall receive his meed to-day

With no suspicion what reverse was near, —
As if no meteoric finger hushed
The doom-word just on the destroyer's lip,
Motioned him off, and let life's sun fall straight." 120
*Braccio* [*looks to the wall of the tent*]. Did he draw that?
*Secretary.* With charcoal, when the watch
Made the report at midnight; Lady Domizia
Spoke of the unfinished Duomo, you remember;
That is his fancy how a Moorish front
Might join to, and complete, the body, — a sketch, —
And again where the cloak hangs, yonder in the shadow.
*Braccio.* He loves that woman.
*Secretary.* She is sent the spy
Of Florence, — spies on you as you on him:
Florence, if only for Domizia's sake,
Is surely safe. What shall I write?
*Braccio.* I see — 130
A Moorish front, nor of such ill design!
Lapo, there 's one thing plain and positive;
Man seeks his own good at the whole world's cost.
What? If to lead our troops, stand forth our chiefs,
And hold our fate, and see us at their beck,
Yet render up the charge when peace return,
Have ever proved too much for Florentines,
Even for the best and bravest of ourselves —
If in the struggle when the soldier's sword
Should sink its point before the statist's pen, 140
And the calm head replace the violent hand,
Virtue on virtue still have fallen away
Before ambition with unvarying fate,
Till Florence' self at last in bitterness
Be forced to own such falls the natural end,
And, sparing further to expose her sons

To a vain strife and profitless disgrace,
Declare, "The foreigner, one not my child,
Shall henceforth lead my troops, reach height by height
The glory, then descend into the shame;
So shall rebellion be less guilt in him,
And punishment the easier task for me:"
— If on the best of us such brand she set,
Can I suppose an utter alien here,
This Luria, our inevitable foe,
Confessed a mercenary and a Moor,
Born free from many ties that bind the rest
Of common faith in Heaven or hope on earth,
No past with us, no future, — such a spirit
Shall hold the path from which our staunchest broke,
Stand firm where every famed precursor fell?
My Lapo, I will frankly say, these proofs
So duly noted of the man's intent,
Are for the doting fools at home, not me.
The charges here, they may be true or false:
— What is set down? Errors and oversights,
A dallying interchange of courtesies
With Pisa's General, — all that, hour by hour,
Puccio's pale discontent has furnished us,
Of petulant speeches, inconsiderate acts,
Now overhazard, overcaution now;
Even that he loves this lady who believes
She outwits Florence, and whom Florence posted
By my procurement here, to spy on me,
Lest I one minute lose her from my sight —
She who remembering her whole House's fall,
That nest of traitors strangled in the birth,
Now labors to make Luria (poor device
As plain) the instrument of her revenge
— That she is ever at his ear to prompt

Inordinate conceptions of his worth,
Exorbitant belief in worth's reward,
And after, when sure disappointment follows,
Proportionable rage at such a wrong —
Why, all these reasons, while I urge them most,
Weigh with me less than least — as nothing weigh.
Upon that broad man's-heart of his, I go:
On what I know must be, yet, while I live,
Shall never be, because I live and know.
Brute-force shall not rule Florence! Intellect
May rule her, bad or good as chance supplies:
But intellect it shall be, pure if bad,
And intellect's tradition so kept up.
Till the good come — 't was intellect that ruled,
Not brute-force bringing from the battle-field
The attributes of wisdom, foresight's graces
We lent it there to lure its grossness on;
All which it took for earnest and kept safe
To show against us in our market-place,
Just as the plumes and tags and swordsman's-gear
(Fetched from the camp where, at their foolish best,
When all was done they frightened nobody)
Perk in our faces in the street, forsooth,
With our own warrant and allowance. No!
The whole procedure 's overcharged, — its end
In too strict keeping with the bad first step.
To conquer Pisa was sheer inspiration?
Well then, to perish for a single fault,
Let that be simple justice! There, my Lapo!
A Moorish front ill suits our Duomo's body:
Blot it out — and bid Luria's sentence come!

[Luria, *who, with* Domizia, *has entered unobserved at the close of the last phrase, now advances.*

*Luria.* And Luria, Luria, what of Luria now?
*Braccio.* Ah, you so close, sir? Lady Domizia too?
I said it needs must be a busy moment
For one like you: that you were now i' the thick
Of your duties, doubtless, while we idlers sat . . .
*Luria.* No — in that paper, — it was in that paper
What you were saying!
*Braccio.* Oh — my day's despatch!
I censure you to Florence: will you see?
*Luria.* See your despatch, your last, for the first time?
Well, if I should, now? For in truth, Domizia,
He would be forced to set about another,
In his sly cool way, the true Florentine,
To mention that important circumstance.
So, while he wrote I should gain time, such time!
Do not send this!
*Braccio.* And wherefore?
*Luria.* These Lucchese
Are not arrived — they never will arrive!
And I must fight to-day, arrived or not,
And I shall beat Tiburzio, that is sure:
And then will be arriving his Lucchese,
But slowly, oh so slowly, just in time
To look upon my battle from the hills,
Like a late moon, of use to nobody!
And I must break my battle up, send forth,
Surround on this side, hold in check on that.
Then comes to-morrow, we negotiate,
You make me send for fresh instructions home,
— Incompleteness, incompleteness!
*Braccio.* Ah, we scribes!
Why, I had registered that very point,
The non-appearance of our foes' ally,

As a most happy fortune ; both at once
Were formidable : singly faced, each falls.
*Luria.* So, no great battle for my Florentines !
No crowning deed, decisive and complete,
For all of them, the simple as the wise,
Old, young, alike, that do not understand
Our wearisome pedantic art of war,
By which we prove retreat may be success,
Delay — best speed, — half loss, at times, — whole gain :
They want results : as if it were their fault !
And you, with warmest wish to be my friend,
Will not be able now to simply say
" Your servant has performed his task — enough !
You ordered, he has executed : good !
Now walk the streets in holiday attire,
Congratulate your friends, till noon strikes fierce,
Then form bright groups beneath the Duomo's shade ! "
No, you will have to argue and explain,
Persuade them, all is not so ill in the end,
Tease, tire them out ! Arrive, arrive, Lucchese !
*Domizia.* Well, you will triumph for the past enough,
Whatever be the present chance ; no service
Falls to the ground with Florence : she awaits
Her savior, will receive him fittingly.
*Luria.* Ah Braccio, you know Florence ! Will she, think you,
Receive one . . . what means " fittingly receive " ?
— Receive compatriots, doubtless — I am none :
And yet Domizia promises so much !
*Braccio.* Kind women still give men a woman's prize.
I know not o'er which gate most boughs will arch,

Nor if the Square will wave red flags or blue.
I should have judged, the fullest of rewards
Our state gave Luria, when she made him chief
Of her whole force, in her best captain's place.
*Luria.* That, my reward ? Florence on my account
Relieved Ser Puccio ? — mark you, my reward !
And Puccio 's having all the fight's true joy —
Goes here and there, gets close, may fight, himself,
While I must order, stand aloof, o'ersee.
That was my calling, there was my true place !
I should have felt, in some one over me,
Florence impersonate, my visible head,
As I am over Puccio, — taking life
Directly from her eye ! They give me you :
But do you cross me, set me half to work ?
I enjoy nothing — though I will, for once !
Decide, shall we join battle ? may I wait ?
*Braccio.* Let us compound the matter ; wait till noon :
Then, no arrival, —
*Luria.* Ah, noon comes too fast !
I wonder, do you guess why I delay
Involuntarily the final blow
As long as possible ? Peace follows it !
Florence at peace, and the calm studious heads
Come out again, the penetrating eyes ;
As if a spell broke, all 's resumed, each art
You boast, more vivid that it slept awhile.
'Gainst the glad heaven, o'er the white palace-front
The interrupted scaffold climbs anew ;
The walls are peopled by the painter's brush ;
The statue to its niche ascends to dwell.
The present noise and trouble have retired
And left the eternal past to rule once more ;

You speak its speech and read its records plain,
Greece lives with you, each Roman breathes your friend:
But Luria — where will then be Luria's place?
*Domizia.* Highest in honor, for that past's own sake,
Of which his actions, sealing up the sum
By saving all that went before from wreck,
Will range as part, with which be worshipped too.
*Luria.* Then I may walk and watch you in your streets,
Lead the smooth life my rough life helps no more,
So different, so new, so beautiful —
Nor fear that you will tire to see parade
The club that slew the lion, now that crooks
And shepherd-pipes come into use again?
For very lone and silent seems my East
In its drear vastness: still it spreads, and still
No Braccios, no Domizias anywhere —
Not evermore! Well, well, to-day is ours!
*Domizia* [*to* Braccio]. Should he not have been one of us?
*Luria.* Oh, no!
Not one of you, and so escape the thrill
Of coming into you, of changing thus, —
Feeling a soul grow on me that restricts
The boundless unrest of the savage heart!
The sea heaves up, hangs loaded o'er the land,
Breaks there and buries its tumultuous strength;
Horror, and silence, and a pause awhile:
Lo, inland glides the gulf-stream, miles away,
In rapture of assent, subdued and still,
'Neath those strange banks, those unimagined skies.
Well, 't is not sure the quiet lasts forever!
Your placid heads still find rough hands new work;

Some minute's chance — there comes the need of mine:
And, all resolved on, I too hear at last.
Oh, you must find some use for me, Ser Braccio!
You hold my strength; 't were best dispose of it:
What you created, see that you find food for —
I shall be dangerous else!

*Braccio.* How dangerous, sir?

*Luria.* There are so many ways, Domizia warns me,
And one with half the power that I possess,
— Grows very formidable. Do you doubt?
Why, first, who holds the army . . .

*Domizia.* While we talk,
Morn wears; we keep you from your proper place,
The field.

*Luria.* Nay, to the field I move no more;
My part is done, and Puccio's may begin:
I cannot trench upon his province longer
With any face. — You think yourselves so safe?
Why, see — in concert with Tiburzio, now —
One could . . .

*Domizia.* A trumpet!

*Luria.* My Lucchese at last!
Arrived, as sure as Florence stands! Your leave!

[*Springs out.*

*Domizia.* How plainly is true greatness charactered
By such unconscious sport as Luria's here,
Strength sharing least the secret of itself!
Be it with head that schemes or hand that acts,
Such save the world which none but they could save,
Yet think whate'er they did, that world could do.

*Braccio.* Yes: and how worthy note, that these same great ones
In hand or head, with such unconsciousness

And all its due entailed humility,
Should never shrink, so far as I perceive,
From taking up whatever tool there be
Effects the whole world's safety or mishap,
Into their mild hands as a thing of course!
The statist finds it natural to lead
The mob who might as easily lead him —
The captain marshals troops born skilled in war —
Statist and captain verily believe!
While we poor scribes . . . you catch me thinking now,
That I shall in this very letter write
What none of you are able! To it, Lapo!

[Domizia *goes.*

This last worst all-affected childish fit
Of Luria's, this be-praised unconsciousness,
Convinces me; the past was no child's play:
It was a man beat Pisa, — not a child.
All 's mere dissimulation — to remove
The fear, he best knows we should entertain.
The utmost danger was at hand. Is 't written?
Now make a duplicate, lest this should fail,
And speak your fullest on the other side.

*Secretary.* I noticed he was busily repairing
My half-effacement of his Duomo sketch,
And, while he spoke of Florence, turned to it,
As the Mage Negro king to Christ the babe.
I judge his childishness the mere relapse
To boyhood of a man who has worked lately,
And presently will work, so, meantime, plays:
Whence, more than ever I believe in him.

*Braccio* [*after a pause*]. The sword! At best, the soldier, as he says,
In Florence — the black face, the barbarous name,

For Italy to boast her show of the age,
Her man of men! To Florence with each letter!

## ACT II.

NOON.

*Domizia.* Well, Florence, shall I reach thee, pierce thy heart
Thro' all its safeguards? Hate is said to help —
Quicken the eye, invigorate the arm;
And this my hate, made up of many hates,
Might stand in scorn of visible instrument,
And will thee dead: yet do I trust it not.
Nor man's devices nor Heaven's memory
Of wickedness forgot on earth so soon,
But thy own nature, — hell and thee I trust,
To keep thee constant in that wickedness,
Where my revenge may meet thee. Turn aside
A single step, for gratitude or shame, —
Grace but this Luria, — this wild mass of rage
I have prepared to launch against thee now, —
With other payment than thy noblest found, —
Give his desert for once its due reward, —
And past thee would my sure destruction roll.
But thou, who mad'st our House thy sacrifice,
It cannot be thou wilt except this Moor
From the accustomed fate of zeal and truth:
Thou wilt deny his looked-for recompense,
And then — I reach thee. Old and trained, my sire
Could bow down on his quiet broken heart,
Die awe-struck and submissive, when at last
The strange blow came for the expected wreath;

And Porzio passed in blind bewilderment
To exile, never to return, — they say,
Perplexed in his frank simple honest soul,
As if some natural law had changed, — how else
Could Florence, on plain fact pronouncing thus,
Judge Porzio's actions worthy such reward?
But Berto, with the ever-passionate pulse,
— Oh that long night, its dreadful hour on hour,
In which no way of getting his fair fame
From their inexplicable charges free,
Was found, save pouring forth the impatient blood
To show its color whether false or no!
My brothers never had a friend like me
Close in their need to watch the time, then speak,
— Burst with a wakening laughter on their dream,
Cry, "Florence was all falseness, so, false here!"
And show them what a simple task remained —
To leave dreams, rise, and punish in God's name
The city wedded to the wickedness.
None stood by them as I by Luria stand.
So, when the stranger cheated of his due
Turns on thee as his rapid nature bids,
Then, Florence, think, a hireling at thy throat
For the first outrage, think who bore thy last,
Yet mutely in forlorn obedience died!
He comes — his friend — black faces in the camp
Where moved those peerless brows and eyes of old.

*Enter* Luria *and* Husain.

*Domizia.* Well, and the movement — is it as you hope?
'Tis Lucca?

*Luria.* Ah, the Pisan trumpet merely!
Tiburzio's envoy, I must needs receive.

*Domizia.* Whom I withdraw before; tho' if I lingered
You could not wonder, for my time fleets fast.
The overtaking night brings such reward!
And where will then be room for me? Yet, praised,
Remember who was first to promise praise,
And envy those who also can perform! [*Goes.*
*Luria.* This trumpet from the Pisans? —
*Husain.* In the camp;
A very noble presence — Braccio's visage
On Puccio's body — calm and fixed and good;
A man I seem as I had seen before:
Most like, it was some statue had the face.
*Luria.* Admit him! This will prove the last delay.
*Husain.* Ay, friend, go on, and die thou going on!
Thou heardst what the grave woman said but now:
To-night rewards thee. That is well to hear;
But stop not therefore: hear it, and go on!
*Luria.* Oh, their reward and triumph and the rest
They round me in the ears with, all day long?
All that, I never take for earnest, friend!
Well would it suit us, — their triumphal arch
Or storied pillar, — thee and me, the Moors!
But gratitude in those Italian eyes —
That, we shall get?
*Husain.* It is too cold an air.
Our sun rose out of yonder mound of mist:
Where is he now? So, I trust none of them.
*Luria.* Truly?
*Husain.* I doubt and fear. There stands a wall
'Twixt our expansive and explosive race
And those absorbing, concentrating men.
They use thee.

*Luria.* And I feel it, Husain! yes,
And care not — yes, an alien force like mine
Is only called to play its part outside
Their different nature; where its sole use seems
To fight with and keep off an adverse force,
As alien, — which repelled, mine too withdraws:
Inside, they know not what to do with me.
Thus I have told them laughingly and oft,
But long since am prepared to learn the worst.
*Husain.* What is the worst?
*Luria.* I will forestall them, Husain,
Will speak the destiny they dare not speak —
Banish myself before they find the heart.
I will be first to say, "The work rewards!
I know, for all your praise, my use is over,
So may it prove! — meanwhile 't is best I go,
Go carry safe my memories of you all
To other scenes of action, newer lands." —
Thus leaving them confirmed in their belief
They would not easily have tired of me.
You think this hard to say?
*Husain.* Say or not say,
So thou but go, so they but let thee go!
This hating people, that hate each the other,
And in one blandness to us Moors unite —
Locked each to each like slippery snakes, I say,
Which still in all their tangles, hissing tongue
And threatening tail, ne'er do each other harm;
While any creature of a better blood,
They seem to fight for, while they circle safe
And never touch it, — pines without a wound,
Withers away beside their eyes and breath.
See thou, if Puccio come not safely out
Of Braccio's grasp, this Braccio sworn his foe,

As Braccio safely from Domizia's toils
Who hates him most! But thou, the friend of all,
. . . Come out of them!

*Luria.* The Pisan trumpet now!

*Husain.* Breathe free — it is an enemy, no friend!
[*Goes.*

*Luria.* He keeps his instincts, no new culture mars
Their perfect use in him; just so the brutes
Rest not, are anxious without visible cause,
When change is in the elements at work,
Which man's trained senses fail to apprehend.
But here, — he takes the distant chariot wheel
For thunder, festal flame for lightning's flash,
The finer traits of cultivated life
For treachery and malevolence: I see!

*Enter* TIBURZIO.

*Luria.* Quick, sir, your message! I but wait your message
To sound the charge. You bring no overture
For truce? I would not, for your General's sake,
You spoke of truce: a time to fight is come,
And, whatsoe'er the fight's event, he keeps
His honest soldier's-name to beat me with,
Or leaves me all himself to beat, I trust!

*Tiburzio.* I am Tiburzio.

*Luria.* You? 'T is — yes . . . Tiburzio!
You were the last to keep the ford i' the valley
From Puccio, when I threw in succors there!
Why, I was on the heights — through the defile
Ten minutes after, when the prey was lost!
You wore an open skull-cap with a twist
Of water-reeds — the plume being hewn away;

While I drove down my battle from the heights,
I saw with my own eyes!
*Tiburzio.* And you are Luria
Who sent my cohort, that laid down its arms
In error of the battle-signal's sense,
Back safely to me at the critical time —
One of a hundred deeds. I know you. Therefore
To none but you could I . . .
*Luria.* No truce, Tiburzio!
*Tiburzio.* Luria, you know the peril imminent
On Pisa, — that you have us in the toils,
Us her last safeguard, all that intercepts
The rage of her implacablest of foes
From Pisa: if we fall to-day, she falls.
Tho' Lucca will arrive, yet, 't is too late.
You have so plainly here the best of it,
That you must feel, brave soldier as you are,
How dangerous we grow in this extreme,
How truly formidable by despair.
Still, probabilities should have their weight:
The extreme chance is ours, but, that chance failing,
You win this battle. Wherefore say I this?
To be well apprehended when I add,
This danger absolutely comes from you.
Were you, who threaten thus, a Florentine . . .
*Luria.* Sir, I am nearer Florence than her sons.
I can, and have perhaps obliged the State,
Nor paid a mere son's duty.
*Tiburzio.* Even so.
Were you the son of Florence, yet endued
With all your present nobleness of soul,
No question, what I must communicate
Would not detach you from her.
*Luria.* Me, detach?

*Tiburzio.* Time urges. You will ruin presently
Pisa, you never knew, for Florence' sake
You think you know. I have from time to time
Made prize of certain secret missives sent
From Braccio here, the Commissary, home:
And knowing Florence otherwise, I piece
The entire chain out, from these its scattered links.
Your trial occupies the Signory;
They sit in judgment on your conduct now.
When men at home inquire into the acts
Which in the field e'en foes appreciate . . .
Brief, they are Florentines! You, saving them,
Seek but the sure destruction saviours find.

*Luria.* Tiburzio!

*Tiburzio.* All the wonder is of course.
I am not here to teach you, nor direct,
Only to loyally apprise — scarce that.
This is the latest letter, sealed and safe,
As it left here an hour ago. One way
Of two thought free to Florence, I command.
The duplicate is on its road; but this, —
Read it, and then I shall have more to say.

*Luria.* Florence!

*Tiburzio.* Now, were yourself a Florentine,
This letter, let it hold the worst it can,
Would be no reason you should fall away.
The mother city is the mother still,
And recognition of the children's service
Her own affair; reward — there 's no reward!
But you are bound by quite another tie.
Nor nature shows, nor reason, why at first
A foreigner, born friend to all alike,
Should give himself to any special State
More than another, stand by Florence' side

Rather than Pisa; 't is as fair a city
You war against as that you fight for — famed
As well as she in story, graced no less
With noble heads and patriotic hearts:
Nor to a stranger's eye would either cause,
Stripped of the cumulative loves and hates
Which take importance from familiar view,
Stand as the right and sole to be upheld.
Therefore, should the preponderating gift
Of love and trust, Florence was first to throw,
Which made you hers, not Pisa's, void the scale, —
Old ties dissolving, things resume their place
And all begins again. Break seal and read!
At least let Pisa offer for you now!
And I, as a good Pisan, shall rejoice —
Though for myself I lose, in gaining you,
This last fight and its opportunity;
The chance it brings of saving Pisa yet,
Or in the turn of battle dying so
That shame should want its extreme bitterness.

*Luria.* Tiburzio, you that fight for Pisa now
As I for Florence . . . say my chance were yours!
You read this letter, and you find . . . no, no!
Too mad!

*Tiburzio.* I read the letter, find they purpose
When I have crushed their foe, to crush me: well?

*Luria.* You, being their captain, what is it you do?

*Tiburzio.* Why, as it is, all cities are alike;
As Florence pays you, Pisa will pay me.
I shall be as belied, whate'er the event,
As you, or more: my weak head, they will say,
Prompted this last expedient, my faint heart
Entailed on them indelible disgrace,
Both which defects ask proper punishment.

Another tenure of obedience, mine!
You are no son of Pisa's: break and read!
*Luria.* And act on what I read? What act were fit?
If the firm-fixed foundation of my faith
In Florence, who to me stands for mankind,
— If that break up and, disimprisoning
From the abyss . . . Ah friend, it cannot be!
You may be very sage, yet — all the world
Having to fail, or your sagacity,
You do not wish to find yourself alone!
What would the world be worth? Whose love be sure?
The world remains: you are deceived!
*Tiburzio.* Your hand!
I lead the vanguard. — If you fall, beside,
The better: I am left to speak! For me,
This was my duty, nor would I rejoice
If I could help, it misses its effect;
And after all you will look gallantly
Found dead here with that letter in your breast.
*Luria.* Tiburzio — I would see these people once
And test them ere I answer finally!
At your arrival let the trumpet sound:
If mine return not then the wonted cry
It means that I believe — am Pisa's!
*Tiburzio.* Well! [*Goes.*
*Luria.* My heart will have it he speaks true! My blood
Beats close to this Tiburzio as a friend.
If he had stept into my watch-tent, night
And the wild desert full of foes around,
I should have broke the bread and given the salt
Secure, and, when my hour of watch was done,

Taken my turn to sleep between his knees,
Safe in the untroubled brow and honest cheek.
Oh world, where all things pass and naught abides,
Oh life, the long mutation — is it so?
Is it with life as with the body's change?
— Where, e'en tho' better follow, good must pass,
Nor manhood's strength can mate with boyhood's grace,
Nor age's wisdom, in its turn, find strength,
But silently the first gift dies away,
And though the new stays, never both at once.
Life's time of savage instinct o'er with me,
It fades and dies away, past trusting more,
As if to punish the ingratitude
With which I turned to grow in these new lights,
And learned to look with European eyes.
Yet it is better, this cold certain way,
Where Braccio's brow tells nothing, Puccio's mouth,
Domizia's eyes reject the searcher: yes!
For on their calm sagacity I lean,
Their sense of right, deliberate choice of good,
Sure, as they know my deeds, they deal with me.
Yes, that is better — that is best of all!
Such faith stays when mere wild belief would go.
Yes — when the desert creature's heart, at fault
Amid the scattering tempest's pillared sands,
Betrays its step into the pathless drift —
The calm instructed eye of man holds fast
By the sole bearing of the visible star,
Sure that when slow the whirling wreck subside,
The boundaries, lost now, shall be found again, —
The palm-trees and the pyramid over all.
Yes: I trust Florence: Pisa is deceived.

*Enter* Braccio, Puccio, *and* Domizia.

*Braccio.* Noon 's at an end: no Lucca? You must fight.

*Luria.* Do you remember ever, gentle friends,
I am no Florentine?

*Domizia.* It is yourself
Who still are forcing us, importunately,
To bear in mind what else we should forget.

*Luria.* For loss! — for what I lose in being none!
No shrewd man, such as you yourselves respect,
But would remind you of the stranger's loss
In natural friends and advocates at home,
Hereditary loves, even rivalships
With precedent for honor and reward.
Still, there 's a gain, too! If you take it so,
The stranger's lot has special gain as well.
Do you forget there was my own far East
I might have given away myself to, once,
As now to Florence, and for such a gift,
Stood there like a descended deity?
There, worship waits us: what is it waits here?
[*Shows the letter.*
See! Chance has put into my hand the means
Of knowing what I earn, before I work.
Should I fight better, should I fight the worse,
With payment palpably before me? See!
Here lies my whole reward! Best learn it now
Or keep it for the end's entire delight?

*Braccio.* If you serve Florence as the vulgar serve,
For swordsman's-pay alone, — break seal and read!
In that case, you will find your full desert.

*Luria.* Give me my one last happy moment, friends!

You need me now, and all the graciousness
This letter can contain will hardly balance
The after-feeling that you need no more.
This moment . . . oh, the East has use with you!
Its sword still flashes — is not flung aside
With the past praise, in a dark corner yet!
How say you? 'T is not so with Florentines,
Captains of yours: for them, the ended war
Is but a first step to the peace begun:
He who did well in war, just earns the right
To begin doing well in peace, you know:
And certain my precursors, — would not such
Look to themselves in such a chance as mine,
Secure the ground they trod upon, perhaps?
For I have heard, by fits, or seemed to hear,
Of strange mishap, mistake, ingratitude,
Treachery even. Say that one of you
Surmised this letter carried what might turn
To harm hereafter, cause him prejudice:
What would he do?

*Domizia* [*hastily*]. Thank God and take revenge!
Hurl her own force against the city straight!
And, even at the moment when the foe
Sounded defiance . . .

[TIBURZIO's *trumpet sounds in the distance.*

*Luria.* Ah, you Florentines!
So would you do? Wisely for you, no doubt.
My simple Moorish instinct bids me clench
The obligation you relieve me from,
Still deeper! [*To* PUCCIO.] Sound our answer, I should say,
And thus: — [*tearing the paper.*] — The battle!
That solves every doubt.

# ACT III.

AFTERNOON.

PUCCIO, *as making a report to* JACOPO.

*Puccio.* And here, your captain must report the rest;
For, as I say, the main engagement over
And Luria's special part in it performed,
How could a subaltern like me expect
Leisure or leave to occupy the field
And glean what dropped from his wide harvesting?
I thought, when Lucca at the battle's end
Came up, just as the Pisan centre broke,
That Luria would detach me and prevent
The flying Pisans seeking what they found,
Friends in the rear, a point to rally by.
But no, more honorable proved my post!
I had the august captive to escort
Safe to our camp; some other could pursue,
Fight, and be famous; gentler chance was mine —
Tiburzio's wounded spirit must be soothed!
He 's in the tent there.

*Jacopo.* Is the substance down?
I write — "The vanguard beaten and both wings
In full retreat, Tiburzio prisoner" —
And now, — "That they fell back and formed again
On Lucca's coming." Why then, after all,
'T is half a victory, no conclusive one?

*Puccio.* Two operations where a sole had served.

*Jacopo.* And Luria's fault was —?

*Puccio.* Oh, for fault — not much!
He led the attack, a thought impetuously,

— There 's commonly more prudence; now, he seemed
To hurry measures, otherwise well judged.
By over-concentrating strength at first
Against the enemy's van, both wings escaped:
That 's reparable, yet it is a fault.

*Enter* Braccio.

*Jacopo.* As good as a full victory to Florence,
With the advantage of a fault beside —
What is it, Puccio? — that by pressing forward
With too impetuous . . .
*Braccio.* The report anon!
Thanks, sir — you have elsewhere a charge, I know.
[Puccio *goes.*
There 's nothing done but I would do again;
Yet, Lapo, it may be the past proves nothing,
And Luria has kept faithful to the close.
*Jacopo.* I was for waiting.
*Braccio.* Yes: so was not I.
He could not choose but tear that letter — true!
Still, certain of his tones, I mind, and looks: —
You saw, too, with a fresher soul than I.
So, Porzio seemed an injured man, they say!
Well, I have gone upon the broad, sure ground.

*Enter* Luria, Puccio, *and* Domizia.

*Luria* [*to* Puccio]. Say, at his pleasure I will see Tiburzio!
All 's at his pleasure.
*Domizia* [*to* Luria]. Were I not forewarned
You would reject, as you do constantly,
Praise, — I might tell you how you have deserved
Of Florence by this last and crowning feat:
But words offend.

*Luria.* Nay, you may praise me now.
I want instruction every hour, I find,
On points where once I saw least need of it;
And praise, I have been used to slight perhaps,
Seems scarce so easily dispensed with now.
After a battle half one's strength is gone;
The glorious passion in us once appeased,
Our reason's calm cold dreadful voice begins.
All justice, power and beauty scarce appear
Monopolized by Florence, as of late,
To me, the stranger: you, no doubt, may know
Why Pisa needs must bear her rival's yoke.
And peradventure I grow nearer you,
For I, too, want to know and be assured.
When a cause ceases to reward itself,
Its friend seeks fresh sustainments; praise is one,
And here stand you — you, lady, praise me well.
But yours — (your pardon) — is unlearned praise.
To the motive, the endeavor, the heart's self,
Your quick sense looks: you crown and call aright
The soul o' the purpose, ere 't is shaped as act,
Takes flesh i' the world, and clothes itself a king.
But when the act comes, stands for what 't is worth,
— Here 's Puccio, the skilled soldier, he 's my judge!
Was all well, Puccio?

*Puccio.* All was . . . must be well:
If we beat Lucca presently, as doubtless . . .
— No, there 's no doubt, we must — all was well done.

*Luria.* In truth? Still you are of the trade, my Puccio!
You have the fellow-craftsman's sympathy.
There 's none cares, like a fellow of the craft,
For the all-unestimated sum of pains

That go to a success the world can see:
They praise then, but the best they never know
— While you know! So, if envy mix with it,
Hate even, still the bottom-praise of all,
Whatever be the dregs, that drop's pure gold!
— For nothing's like it; nothing else records
Those daily, nightly drippings in the dark
Of the heart's blood, the world lets drop away
Forever — so, pure gold that praise must be!
And I have yours, my soldier! yet the best
Is still to come. There's one looks on apart
Whom all refers to, failure or success;
What's done might be our best, our utmost work,
And yet inadequate to serve his need.
Here's Braccio now, for Florence — here's our service —
Well done for us, seems it well done for him?
His chosen engine, tasked to its full strength
Answers the end? Should he have chosen higher?
Do we help Florence, now our best is wrought?
*Braccio.* This battle, with the foregone services,
Saves Florence.
*Luria.* Why then, all is very well!
Here am I in the middle of my friends,
Who know me and who love me, one and all.
And yet . . . 't is like . . . this instant while I speak
Is like the turning-moment of a dream
When . . . Ah, you are not foreigners like me!
Well then, one always dreams of friends at home;
And always comes, I say, the turning-point
When something changes in the friendly eyes
That love and look on you . . . so slight, so slight . . .
And yet it tells you they are dead and gone,

Or changed and enemies, for all their words,
And all is mockery and a maddening show.
You now, so kind here, all you Florentines,
What is it in your eyes . . . those lips, those brows . . .
Nobody spoke it, yet I know it well!
Come now — this battle saves you, all 's at end,
Your use of me is o'er, for good, for ill, —
Come now, what 's done against me, while I speak,
In Florence? Come! I feel it in my blood,
My eyes, my hair, a voice is in my ears
That spite of all this smiling and soft speech
You are betraying me. What is it you do?
Have it your way, and think my use is over —
Think you are saved and may throw off the mask —
Have it my way, and think more work remains
Which I could do, — so, show you fear me not!
Or prudent be, or daring, as you choose,
But tell me — tell what I refused to know
At noon, lest heart should fail me! Well? That letter?
My fate is sealed at Florence! What is it?

*Braccio.* Sir, I shall not deny what you divine.
It is no novelty for innocence
To be suspected, but a privilege:
The after certain compensation comes.
Charges, I say not whether false or true,
Have been preferred against you some time since,
Which Florence was bound, plainly, to receive,
And which are therefore undergoing now
The due investigation. That is all.
I doubt not but your innocence will prove
Apparent and illustrious, as to me,
To them this evening, when the trial ends.

*Luria.* My trial?

*Domizia.* Florence, Florence to the end,
My whole heart thanks thee!
*Puccio* [*to* Braccio]. What is "trial," sir?
It was not for a trial — surely, no —
I furnished you those notes from time to time?
I held myself aggrieved — I am a man —
And I might speak, — ay, and speak mere truth, too,
And yet not mean at bottom of my heart
What should assist a — trial, do you say?
You should have told me!
*Domizia.* Nay, go on, go on!
His sentence! Do they sentence him? What is it?
The block — wheel?
*Braccio.* Sentence there is none as yet,
Nor shall I give my own opinion now
Of what it should be, or is like to be.
When it is passed, applaud or disapprove!
Up to that point, what is there to impugn?
*Luria.* They are right, then, to try me?
*Braccio.* I assert,
Maintain and justify the absolute right
Of Florence to do all she can have done
In this procedure, — standing on her guard,
Receiving even services like yours
With utmost fit suspicious wariness.
In other matters, keep the mummery up!
Take all the experiences of all the world,
Each knowledge that broke through a heart to life,
Each reasoning which, to reach, burnt out a brain,
— In other cases, know these, warrant these,
And then dispense with these — 't is very well!
Let friend trust friend, and love demand love's like,
And gratitude be claimed for benefits, —
There 's grace in that, — and when the fresh heart breaks,

The new brain proves a ruin, what of them?
Where is the matter of one moth the more
Singed in the candle, at a summer's end?
But Florence is no simple John or James
To have his toy, his fancy, his conceit
That he 's the one excepted man by fate,
And, when fate shows him he 's mistaken there,
Die with all good men's praise, and yield his place
To Paul and George intent to try their chance!
Florence exists because these pass away.
She 's a contrivance to supply a type
Of man, which men's deficiencies refuse;
She binds so many, that she grows out of them —
Stands steady o'er their numbers, though they change
And pass away — there 's always what upholds,
Always enough to fashion the great show.
As see, yon hanging city, in the sun,
Of shapely cloud substantially the same!
A thousand vapors rise and sink again,
Are interfused, and live their life and die, —
Yet ever hangs the steady show i' the air,
Under the sun's straight influence: that is well,
That is worth heaven should hold, and God should bless!
And so is Florence, — the unseen sun above,
Which draws and holds suspended all of us,
Binds transient vapors into a single cloud
Differing from each and better than they all.
And shall she dare to stake this permanence
On any one man's faith? Man's heart is weak,
And its temptations many: let her prove
Each servant to the very uttermost
Before she grant him her reward, I say!

*Domizia.* And as for hearts she chances to mistake,

Wronged hearts, not destined to receive reward,
Though they deserve it, did she only know,
— What should she do for these ?
*Braccio.* What does she not ?
Say, that she gives them but herself to serve !
Here 's Luria — what had profited his strength,
When half an hour of sober fancying
Had shown him step by step the uselessness
Of strength exerted for strength's proper sake ?
But the truth is, she did create that strength,
Draw to the end the corresponding means.
The world is wide — are we the only men ?
Oh, for the time, the social purpose' sake,
Use words agreed on, bandy epithets,
Call any man the sole great wise and good !
But shall we therefore, standing by ourselves,
Insult our souls and God with the same speech ?
There, swarm the ignoble thousands under him :
What marks us from the hundreds and the tens ?
Florence took up, turned all one way the soul
Of Luria with its fires, and here he glows !
She takes me out of all the world as him,
Fixing my coldness till like ice it checks
The fire ! So, Braccio, Luria, which is best ?
*Luria.* Ah, brave me ? And is this indeed the way
To gain your good word and sincere esteem ?
Am I the baited animal that must turn
And fight his baiters to deserve their praise ?
Obedience is mistake then ? Be it so !
Do you indeed remember I stand here
The captain of the conquering army, — mine —
With all your tokens, praise and promise, ready
To show for what their names meant when you gave,
Not what you style them now you take away ?

If I call in my troops to arbitrate,
And dash the first enthusiastic thrill
Of victory with this you menace now —
Commend to the instinctive popular sense,
My story first, your comment afterward, —
Will they take, think you, part with you or me?
If I say — I, the laborer they saw work,
Ending my work, ask pay, and find my lords
Have all this while provided silently
Against the day of pay and proving faith,
By what you call my sentence that 's to come —
Will friends advise I wait complacently?
If I meet Florence half way at their head,
What will you do, my mild antagonist?

*Braccio.* I will rise up like fire, proud and triumphant
That Florence knew you thoroughly and by me,
And so was saved. "See, Italy," I 'll say,
"The crown of our precautions! Here 's a man
Was far advanced, just touched on the belief
Less subtle cities had accorded long;
But we were wiser: at the end comes this!"
And from that minute, where is Luria? Lost!
The very stones of Florence cry against
The all-exacting, naught-enduring fool
Who thus resents her first probation, flouts
As if he, only, shone and cast no shade,
He, only, walked the earth with privilege
Against suspicion, free where angels fear:
He, for the first inquisitive mother's-word,
Must turn, and stand on his defence, forsooth!
Reward? You will not be worth punishment!

*Luria.* And Florence knew me thus! Thus I have lived, —

And thus you, with the clear fine intellect,
Braccio, the cold acute instructed mind,
Out of the stir, so calm and unconfused,
Reported me — how could you otherwise !
Ay ? — and what dropped from you, just now, moreover ?
Your information, Puccio ? — Did your skill,
Your understanding sympathy approve
Such a report of me ? Was this the end ?
Or is even this the end ? Can I stop here ?
You, lady, with the woman's stand apart,
The heart to see with, past man's brain and eyes,
. . . I cannot fathom why you should destroy
The unoffending one, you call your friend —
Still, lessoned by the good examples here
Of friendship, 't is but natural I ask —
Had you a further aim, in aught you urged,
Than your friend's profit — in all those instances
Of perfidy, all Florence wrought of wrong —
All I remember now for the first time ?

*Domizia.* I am a daughter of the Traversari,
Sister of Porzio and of Berto both,
So, have foreseen all that has come to pass.
I knew the Florence that could doubt their faith,
Must needs mistrust a stranger's — dealing them
Punishment, would deny him his reward.
And I believed, the shame they bore and died,
He would not bear, but live and fight against —
Seeing he was of other stuff than they.

*Luria.* Hear them ! All these against one foreigner !
And all this while, where is, in the whole world,
To his good faith a single witness ?

*Tiburzio* [*who has entered unseen during the preceding dialogue*]. Here !

Thus I bear witness, not in word but deed.
I live for Pisa; she 's not lost to-day
By many chances — much prevents from that!
Her army has been beaten, I am here,
But Lucca comes at last, one happy chance!
I rather would see Pisa three times lost
Than saved by any traitor, even by you;
The example of a traitor's happy fortune
Would bring more evil in the end than good; —
Pisa rejects the traitor, craves yourself!
I, in her name, resign forthwith to you
My charge, — the highest office, sword and shield!
You shall not, by my counsel, turn on Florence
Your army, give her calumny that ground —
Nor bring one soldier: be you all we gain!
And all she 'll lose, — a head to deck some bridge,
And save the cost o' the crown should deck the head.
Leave her to perish in her perfidy,
Plague-stricken and stripped naked to all eyes,
A proverb and by-word in all mouths!
Go you to Pisa! Florence is my place —
Leave me to tell her of the rectitude,
I, from the first, told Pisa, knowing it.
To Pisa!

*Domizia.* Ah my Braccio, are you caught?

*Braccio.* Puccio, good soldier and good citizen,
Whom I have ever kept beneath my eye,
Ready as fit, to serve in this event
Florence, who clear foretold it from the first —
Through me, she gives you the command and charge
She takes, through me, from him who held it late!
A painful trial, very sore, was yours:
All that could draw out, marshal in array
The selfish passions 'gainst the public good —

Slights, scorns, neglects, were heaped on you to bear:
And ever you did bear and bow the head!
It had been sorry trial, to precede
Your feet, hold up the promise of reward
For luring gleam; your footsteps kept the track
Thro' dark and doubt: take all the light at once!
Trial is over, consummation shines;
Well have you served, as well henceforth command!
*Puccio.* No, no . . . I dare not! I am grateful, glad;
But Luria — you shall understand he 's wronged:
And he 's my captain: this is not the way
We soldiers climb to fortune: think again!
The sentence is not even passed, beside!
I dare not: where 's the soldier could?
*Luria.* Now, Florence —
Is it to be? You will know all the strength
O' the savage — to your neck the proof must go?
You will prove the brute nature? Ah, I see!
The savage plainly is impassible:
He keeps his calm way through insulting words,
Sarcastic looks, sharp gestures — one of which
Would stop you, fatal to your finer sense,
But if he stolidly advance, march mute
Without a mark upon his callous hide,
Through the mere brushwood you grow angry with,
And leave the tatters of your flesh upon,
— You have to learn that when the true bar comes,
The murk mid-forest, the grand obstacle,
Which when you reach, you give the labor up,
Nor dash on, but lie down composed before,
— He goes against it, like the brute he is:
It falls before him, or he dies in his course.

I kept my course through past ingratitude:
I saw — it does seem, now, as if I saw,
Could not but see, those insults as they fell,
— Ay, let them glance from off me, very like,
Laughing, perhaps, to think the quality
You grew so bold on, while you so despised
The Moor's dull mute inapprehensive mood,
Was saving you: I bore and kept my course.
Now real wrong fronts me: see if I succumb!
Florence withstands me? I will punish her.

At night my sentence will arrive, you say.
Till then I cannot, if I would, rebel
— Unauthorized to lay my office down,
Retaining my full power to will and do:
After — it is to see. Tiburzio, thanks!
Go; you are free: join Lucca! I suspend
All further operations till to-night.
Thank you, and for the silence most of all!
[*To* Braccio.] Let my complacent bland accuser go
Carry his self-approving head and heart
Safe through the army which would trample him
Dead in a moment at my word or sign!
Go, sir, to Florence; tell friends what I say —
That while I wait my sentence, theirs waits them!
[*To* Domizia.] You, lady, — you have black Italian eyes!
I would be generous if I might: oh, yes —
For I remember how so oft you seemed
Inclined at heart to break the barrier down
Which Florence finds God built between us both.
Alas, for generosity! this hour
Asks retribution: bear it as you may,
I must — the Moor — the savage, — pardon you!
Puccio, my trusty soldier, see them forth!

## ACT IV.

EVENING.

*Enter* Puccio *and* Jacopo.

*Puccio.* What Luria will do? Ah, 'tis yours, fair sir,
Your and your subtle-witted master's part,
To tell me that; I tell you what he can.

*Jacopo.* Friend, you mistake my station: I observe
The game, watch how my betters play, no more.

*Puccio.* But mankind are not pieces — there 's your fault!
You cannot push them, and, the first move made,
Lean back and study what the next shall be,
In confidence that, when 't is fixed upon,
You find just where you left them, blacks and whites:
Men go on moving when your hand 's away.
You build, I notice, firm on Luria's faith
This whole time, — firmlier than I choose to build,
Who never doubted it — of old, that is —
With Luria in his ordinary mind.
But now, oppression makes the wise man mad:
How do I know he will not turn and stand
And hold his own against you, as he may?
Suppose he but withdraw to Pisa — well, —
Then, even if all happen to your wish,
Which is a chance . . .

*Jacopo.* Nay — 't was an oversight,
Not waiting till the proper warrant came:
You could not take what was not ours to give.
But when at night the sentence really comes,
Our city authorizes past dispute

Luria's removal and transfers the charge,
You will perceive your duty and accept?
*Puccio.* Accept what? muster-rolls of soldiers' names?
An army upon paper? I want men,
The hearts as well as hands — and where 's a heart
But beats with Luria, in the multitude
I come from walking through by Luria's side?
You gave them Luria, set him thus to grow,
Head-like, upon their trunk; one heart feeds both,
They feel him there, live twice, and well know why.
— For they do know, if you are ignorant,
Who kept his own place and respected theirs,
Managed their sweat, yet never spared his blood.
All was your act: another might have served —
There 's peradventure no such dearth of heads —
But you chose Luria: so, they grew one flesh,
And now, for nothing they can understand,
Luria removed, off is to roll the head;
The body 's mine — much I shall do with it!
*Jacopo.* That 's at the worst.
*Puccio.* No — at the best, it is!
Best, do you hear? I saw them by his side.
Only we two with Luria in the camp
Are left that keep the secret? You think that?
Hear what I know: from rear to van, no heart
But felt the quiet patient hero there
Was wronged, nor in the moveless ranks an eye
But glancing told its fellow the whole story
Of that convicted silent knot of spies
Who passed thro' them to Florence; they might pass —
No breast but gladlier beat when free of such!
Our troops will catch up Luria, close him round,

Bear him to Florence as their natural lord,
Partake his fortune, live or die with him.
*Jacopo.* And by mistake catch up along with him
Puccio, no doubt, compelled in self despite
To still continue second in command!
*Puccio.* No, sir, no second nor so fortunate!
Your tricks succeed with me too well for that!
I am as you have made me, live and die
To serve your end — a mere trained fighting-hack,
With words, you laugh at while they leave your mouth
For my life's rule and ordinance of God!
I have to do my duty, keep my faith,
And earn my praise, and guard against my blame,
As I was trained. I shall accept your charge,
And fight against one better than myself,
Spite of my heart's conviction of his worth —
That, you may count on! — just as hitherto
I have gone on, persuaded I was wronged,
Slighted, insulted, terms we learn by rote, —
All because Luria superseded me —
Because the better nature, fresh-inspired,
Mounted above me to its proper place!
What mattered all the kindly graciousness,
The cordial brother's-bearing? This was clear —
I, once the captain, now was subaltern,
And so must keep complaining like a fool!
Go, take the curse of a lost soul, I say!
You neither play your puppets to the end,
Nor treat the real man, — for his realness' sake
Thrust rudely in their place, — with such regard
As might console them for their altered rank.
Me, the mere steady soldier, you depose
For Luria, and here 's all your pet deserves!
Of what account, then, is your laughing-stock?

One word for all : whatever Luria does,
— If backed by his indignant troops he turn,
Revenge himself, and Florence go to ground, —
Or, for a signal everlasting shame,
He pardon you, simply seek better friends,
Side with the Pisans and Lucchese for change
— And if I, pledged to ingrates past belief,
Dare fight against a man such fools call false,
Who, inasmuch as he was true, fights me, —
Whichever way he win, he wins for worth,
For every soldier, for all true and good!
Sir, chronicling the rest, omit not this !

*As they go, enter* Luria *and* Husain.

*Husain.* Saw'st thou? — For they are gone! The world lies bare
Before thee, to be tasted, felt and seen
Like what it is, now Florence goes away!
Thou livest now, with men art man again!
Those Florentines were all to thee of old;
But Braccio, but Domizia, gone is each,
There lie beneath thee thine own multitudes!
Saw'st thou?

*Luria.* I saw.

*Husain.* Then, hold thy course, my king!
The years return. Let thy heart have its way :
Ah, they would play with thee as with all else,
Turn thee to use, and fashion thee anew,
Find out God's fault in thee as in the rest?
Oh watch, oh listen only to these fiends
Once at their occupation! Ere we know,
The free great heaven is shut, their stifling pall
Drops till it frets the very tingling hair,
So weighs it on our head, — and, for the earth,

Our common earth is tethered up and down,
Over and across — "here shalt thou move," they cry!
*Luria.* Ay, Husain?
*Husain.* So have they spoiled all beside!
So stands a man girt round with Florentines,
Priests, graybeards, Braccios, women, boys and spies,
All in one tale, all singing the same song,
How thou must house, and live at bed and board,
Take pledge and give it, go their every way,
Breathe to their measure, make thy blood beat time
With theirs — or, all is nothing — thou art lost —
A savage, how shouldst thou perceive as they?
Feel glad to stand 'neath God's close naked hand!
Look up to it! Why, down they pull thy neck,
Lest it crush thee, who feel'st it and wouldst kiss,
Without their priests that needs must glove it first,
Lest peradventure flesh offend thy lip.
Love woman! Why, a very beast thou art!
Thou must . . .
*Luria.* Peace, Husain!
*Husain.* Ay but, spoiling all,
For all, else true things, substituting false,
That they should dare spoil, of all instincts, thine!
Should dare to take thee with thine instincts up,
Thy battle-ardors, like a ball of fire,
And class them and allow them place and play
So far, no farther — unabashed the while!
Thou with the soul that never can take rest —
Thou born to do, undo, and do again,
And never to be still, — wouldst thou make war?
Oh, that is commendable, just and right!
"Come over," say they, "have the honor due
In living out thy nature! Fight thy best:
It is to be for Florence, not thyself!

For thee, it were a horror and a plague;
For us, when war is made for Florence, see,
How all is changed: the fire that fed on earth
Now towers to heaven!" —
*Luria.* And what sealed up so long
My Husain's mouth?
*Husain.* Oh friend, oh lord — for me,
What am I? — I was silent at thy side,
Who am a part of thee. It is thy hand,
Thy foot that glows when in the heart fresh blood
Boils up, thou heart of me! Now, live again,
Again love as thou likest, hate as free!
Turn to no Braccios nor Domizias now,
To ask, before thy very limbs dare move,
If Florence' welfare be concerned thereby!
*Luria.* So clear what Florence must expect of me?
*Husain.* Both armies against Florence! Take revenge!
Wide, deep — to live upon, in feeling now, —
And, after live, in memory, year by year —
And, with the dear conviction, die at last!
She lies now at thy pleasure: pleasure have!
Their vaunted intellect that gilds our sense,
And blends with life, to show it better by,
— How think'st thou? — I have turned that light on them!
They called our thirst of war a transient thing;
"The battle-element must pass away
From life," they said, "and leave a tranquil world."
— Master, I took their light and turned it full
On that dull turgid vein they said would burst
And pass away; and as I looked on life,
Still everywhere I tracked this, though it hid
And shifted, lay so silent as it thought,
Changed shape and hue yet ever was the same.

Why, 't was all fighting, all their nobler life!
All work was fighting, every harm — defeat,
And every joy obtained — a victory!
Be not their dupe!
— Their dupe? That hour is past!
Here stand'st thou in the glory and the calm:
All is determined. Silence for me now!

[HUSAIN *goes.*

*Luria.* Have I heard all?

*Domizia* [*advancing from the background*]. No, Luria, I remain!
Not from the motives these have urged on thee,
Ignoble, insufficient, incomplete,
And pregnant each with sure seeds of decay,
As failing of sustainment from thyself,
— Neither from low revenge, nor selfishness,
Nor savage lust of power, nor one, nor all,
Shalt thou abolish Florence! I proclaim
The angel in thee, and reject the sprites
Which ineffectual crowd about his strength,
And mingle with his work and claim a share!
Inconsciously to the augustest end
Thou hast arisen: second not in rank
So much as time, to him who first ordained
That Florence, thou art to destroy, should be.
Yet him a star, too, guided, who broke first
The pride of lonely power, the life apart,
And made the eminences, each to each,
Lean o'er the level world and let it lie
Safe from the thunder henceforth 'neath their tops;
So the few famous men of old combined,
And let the multitude rise underneath,
And reach them and unite — so Florence grew:
Braccio speaks true, it was well worth the price.

But when the sheltered many grew in pride
And grudged the station of the elected ones,
Who, greater than their kind, are truly great
Only in voluntary servitude —
Time was for thee to rise, and thou art here.
Such plague possessed this Florence: who can tell
The mighty girth and greatness at the heart
Of those so perfect pillars of the grove
She pulled down in her envy? Who as I,
The light weak parasite born but to twine
Round each of them and, measuring them, live?
My light love keeps the matchless circle safe,
My slender life proves what has passed away.
I lived when they departed; lived to cling
To thee, the mighty stranger; thou wouldst rise
And burst the thraldom, and avenge, I knew.
I have done nothing; all was thy strong bole.
But a bird's weight can break the infant tree
Which after holds an aery in its arms,
And 't was my care that naught should warp thy spire
From rising to the height; the roof is reached
O' the forest, break through, see extend the sky!
Go on to Florence, Luria! 'T is man's cause!
Fail thou, and thine own fall were least to dread:
Thou keepest Florence in her evil way,
Encouragest her sin so much the more —
And while the ignoble past is justified,
Thou all the surelier warp'st the future growth,
The chiefs to come, the Lurias yet unborn,
That, greater than thyself, are reached o'er thee
Who giv'st the vantage-ground their foes require
As o'er my prostrate House thyself wast reached.
Man calls thee, God requites thee! All is said,
The mission of my House fulfilled at last:

And the mere woman, speaking for herself,
Reserves speech — it is now no woman's time.
[DOMIZIA *goes.*

*Luria.* Thus at the last must figure Luria, then!
Doing the various work of all his friends,
And answering every purpose save his own.
No doubt, 'tis well for them to wish; but him —
After the exploit what were left? Perchance
A little pride upon the swarthy brow,
At having brought successfully to bear
'Gainst Florence' self her own especial arms, —
Her craftiness, impelled by fiercer strength
From Moorish blood than feeds the northern wit
But after! — once the easy vengeance willed,
Beautiful Florence at a word laid low
— (Not in her domes and towers and palaces,
Not even in a dream, that outrage!) — low,
As shamed in her own eyes henceforth forever,
Low, for the rival cities round to laugh,
Conquered and pardoned by a hireling Moor!
— For him, who did the irreparable wrong,
What would be left, his life's illusion fled, —
What hope or trust in the forlorn wide world?
How strange that Florence should mistake me so!
Whence grew this? What withdrew her faith from me?
Some cause! These fretful-blooded children talk
Against their mother, — they are wronged, they say —
Notable wrongs her smile makes up again!
So, taking fire at each supposed offence,
They may speak rashly, suffer for their speech:
But what could it have been in word or deed
Thus injured me? Some one word spoken more
Out of my heart, and all had changed perhaps.
My fault, it must have been, — for, what gain they?

Why risk the danger? See, what I could do!
And my fault, wherefore visit upon them,
My Florentines? The notable revenge
I meditated! To stay passively,
Attend their summons, be as they dispose!
Why, if my very soldiers keep the rank,
And if my chieftains acquiesce, what then?
I ruin Florence, teach her friends mistrust,
Confirm her enemies in harsh belief,
And when she finds one day, as find she must,
The strange mistake, and how my heart was hers,
Shall it console me, that my Florentines
Walk with a sadder step, in graver guise,
Who took me with such frankness, praised me so,
At the glad outset? Had they loved me less,
They had less feared what seemed a change in me.
And after all, who did the harm? Not they!
How could they interpose with those old fools
I' the council? Suffer for those old fools' sake —
They, who made pictures of me, sang the songs
About my battles? Ah, we Moors get blind
Out of our proper world, where we can see!
The sun that guides is closer to us! There —
There, my own orb! He sinks from out the sky.
Why, there! a whole day has he blessed the land,
My land, our Florence all about the hills,
The fields and gardens, vineyards, olive-grounds,
All have been blest: and yet we Florentines
With souls intent upon our battle here,
Found that he rose too soon, or set too late,
Gave us no vantage, or gave Pisa much —
Therefore we wronged him! Does he turn in ire
To burn the earth that cannot understand?
Or drop out quietly, and leave the sky,

His task once ended? Night wipes blame away.
Another morning from my East shall spring
And find all eyes at leisure, all disposed
To watch and understand its work, no doubt.
So, praise the new sun, the successor praise,
Praise the new Luria and forget the old!
[*Taking a phial from his breast.*
Strange! This is all I brought from my own land
To help me: Europe would supply the rest,
All needs beside, all other helps save one!
I thought of adverse fortune, battle lost,
The natural upbraiding of the loser,
And then this quiet remedy to seek
At end of the disastrous day. [*He drinks.*
'T is sought!
This was my happy triumph-morning: Florence
Is saved: I drink this, and ere night, — die! Strange!

## ACT V.

NIGHT.

LURIA *and* PUCCIO.

*Luria.* I thought to do this, not to talk this: well,
Such were my projects for the city's good,
To help her in attack or by defence.
Time, here as elsewhere, soon or late may take
Our foresight by surprise thro' chance and change;
But not a little we provide against
— If you see clear on every point.
*Puccio.* Most clear.
*Luria.* Then all is said — not much, if you count words,

Yet to an understanding ear enough
And all that my brief stay permits, beside.
Nor must you blame me, as I sought to teach
My elder in command, or threw a doubt
Upon the very skill, it comforts me
To know I leave, — your steady soldiership
Which never failed me: yet, because it seemed
A stranger's eye might haply note defect
That skill, through use and custom, overlooks —
I have gone into the old cares once more,
As if I had to come and save again
Florence — that May — that morning! 'T is night now.
Well — I broke off with? . . .

*Puccio.* Of the past campaign
You spoke — of measures to be kept in mind
For future use.

*Luria.* True, so . . . but, time — no time!
As well end here: remember this, and me!
Farewell now!

*Puccio.* Dare I speak?

*Luria.* South o' the river —
How is the second stream called . . . no, — the third?

*Puccio.* Pesa.

*Luria.* And a stone's cast from the fording-place,
To the east, — the little mount's name?

*Puccio.* Lupo.

*Luria.* Ay!
Ay — there the tower, and all that side is safe!
With San Romano, west of Evola,
San Miniato, Scala, Empoli,
Five towers in all, — forget not!

*Puccio.* Fear not me!

*Luria.* — Nor to memorialize the Council now,

I' the easy hour, on those battalions' claim,
Who forced a pass by Staggia on the hills,
And kept the Sienese at check !
*Puccio.* One word —
Sir, I must speak ! That you submit yourself
To Florence' bidding, howsoe'er it prove,
And give up the command to me — is much,
Too much, perhaps : but what you tell me now,
Even will affect the other course you choose —
Poor as it may be, perils even that !
Refuge you seek at Pisa : yet these plans
All militate for Florence, all conclude
Your formidable work to make her queen
O' the country, — which her rivals rose against
When you began it, — which to interrupt,
Pisa would buy you off at any price !
You cannot mean to sue for Pisa's help,
With this made perfect and on record ?
*Luria.* I —
At Pisa, and for refuge, do you say ?
*Puccio.* Where are you going, then ? You must decide
On leaving us, a silent fugitive,
Alone, at night — you, stealing through our lines,
Who were this morning's Luria, — you escape
To painfully begin the world once more,
With such a past, as it had never been !
Where are you going ?
*Luria.* Not so far, my Puccio,
But that I hope to hear, enjoy and praise
(If you mind praise from your old captain yet)
Each happy blow you strike for Florence.
*Puccio.* Ay, —
But ere you gain your shelter, what may come ?

For see — though nothing 's surely known as yet,
Still — truth must out — I apprehend the worst.
If mere suspicion stood for certainty
Before, there 's nothing can arrest the step
Of Florence toward your ruin, once on foot.
Forgive her fifty times, it matters not!
And having disbelieved your innocence,
How can she trust your magnanimity?
You may do harm to her — why then, you will!
And Florence is sagacious in pursuit.
Have you a friend to count on?
*Luria.* One sure friend.
*Puccio.* Potent?
*Luria.* All-potent.
*Puccio.* And he is apprised?
*Luria.* He waits me.
*Puccio.* So! — Then I, put in your place,
Making my profit of all done by you,
Calling your labors mine, reaping their fruit,
To this, the State's gift, now add yours beside —
That I may take as my peculiar store
These your instructions to work Florence good.
And if, by putting some few happily
In practice, I should both advantage her
And draw down honor on myself, — what then?
*Luria.* Do it, my Puccio! I shall know and praise.
*Puccio.* Though so, men say, "mark what we gain by change
— A Puccio for a Luria!"
*Luria.* Even so.
*Puccio.* Then, not for fifty hundred Florences,
Would I accept one office save my own,
Fill any other than my rightful post
Here at your feet, my captain and my lord!

That such a cloud should break, such trouble be,
Ere a man settle, soul and body, down
Into his true place and take rest forever!
Here were my wise eyes fixed on your right-hand,
And so the bad thoughts came and the worse words,
And all went wrong and painfully enough, —
No wonder, — till, the right spot stumbled on,
All the jar stops, and there is peace at once!
I am yours now, — a tool your right-hand wields!
God's love, that I should live, the man I am,
On orders, warrants, patents, and the like,
As if there were no glowing eye i' the world
To glance straight inspiration to my brain,
No glorious heart to give mine twice the beats!
For, see — my doubt, where is it? — fear? 't is flown!
And Florence and her anger are a tale
To scare a child. Why, half-a-dozen words
Will tell her, spoken as I now can speak,
Her error, my past folly — and all 's right,
And you are Luria, our great chief again!
Or at the worst — which worst were best of all —
To exile or to death I follow you.

*Luria.* Thanks, Puccio! Let me use the privilege
You grant me: if I still command you, — stay!
Remain here — my vicegerent, it shall be,
And not successor: let me, as of old,
Still serve the State, my spirit prompting yours —
Still triumph, one for both. There! Leave me now!
You cannot disobey my first command?
Remember what I spoke of Jacopo,
And what you promised to concert with him!
Send him to speak with me — nay, no farewell!
You shall be by me when the sentence comes.

[Puccio *goes.*

So, there's one Florentine returns again!
Out of the genial morning-company,
One face is left to take into the night.

*Enter* JACOPO.

*Jacopo.* I wait for your command, sir.
*Luria.* What, so soon?
I thank your ready presence and fair word.
I used to notice you in early days
As of the other species, so to speak,
Those watchers of the lives of us who act —
That weigh our motives, scrutinize our thoughts.
So, I propound this to your faculty
As you would tell me, were a town to take
. . . That is, of old. I am departing hence
Under these imputations; that is naught —
I leave no friend on whom they may rebound,
Hardly a name behind me in the land,
Being a stranger: all the more behoves
That I regard how altered were the case
With natives of the country, Florentines
On whom the like mischance should fall: the roots
O' the tree survive the ruin of the trunk —
No root of mine will throb, you understand.
But I had predecessors, Florentines,
Accused as I am now, and punished so —
The Traversari: you know more than I
How stigmatized they are, and lost in shame.
Now Puccio, who succeeds me in command,
Both served them and succeeded, in due time;
He knows the way, holds proper documents,
And has the power to lay the simple truth
Before an active spirit, as I count yours:
And also there's Tiburzio, my new friend,

Will, at a word, confirm such evidence,
He being the great chivalric soul we know.
I put it to your tact, sir — were 't not well,
— A grace, though but for contrast's sake, no more, —
If you who witness, and have borne a share
Involuntarily in my mischance,
Should, of your proper motion, set your skill
To indicate — that is, investigate
The right or wrong of what mischance befell
Those famous citizens, your countrymen?
Nay, you shall promise nothing: but reflect,
And if your sense of justice prompt you — good!

*Jacopo.* And if, the trial past, their fame stand clear
To all men's eyes, as yours, my lord, to mine —
Their ghosts may sleep in quiet satisfied!
For me, a straw thrown up into the air,
My testimony goes for a straw's worth.
I used to hold by the instructed brain,
And move with Braccio as my master-wind;
The heart leads surelier: I must move with you —
As greatest now, who ever were the best.
So, let the last and humblest of your servants
Accept your charge, as Braccio's heretofore,
And tender homage by obeying you! [JACOPO *goes.*

*Luria.* Another! Luria goes not poorly forth.
If we could wait! The only fault 's with time;
All men become good creatures: but so slow!

*Enter* DOMIZIA.

*Luria.* Ah, you once more?

*Domizia.* Domizia, whom you knew,
Performed her task, and died with it. 'T is I,
Another woman, you have never known.
Let the past sleep now!

*Luria.* I have done with it.
*Domizia.* How inexhaustibly the spirit grows!
One object, she seemed erewhile born to reach
With her whole energies and die content, —
So like a wall at the world's edge it stood,
With naught beyond to live for, — is that reached?
Already are new undreamed energies
Outgrowing under, and extending farther
To a new object; there 's another world.
See! I have told the purpose of my life;
'T is gained: you are decided, well or ill —
You march on Florence, or submit to her —
My work is done with you, your brow declares.
But — leave you? More of you seems yet to reach:
I stay for what I just begin to see.
*Luria.* So that you turn not to the past!
*Domizia.* You trace
Nothing but ill in it — my selfish impulse,
Which sought its end and disregarded yours?
*Luria.* Speak not against your nature: best, each keep
His own — you, yours — most, now that I keep mine,
— At least, fall by it, having too weakly stood.
God's finger marks distinctions, all so fine,
We would confound: the lesser has its use,
Which, when it apes the greater, is forgone.
I, born a Moor, lived half a Florentine;
But, punished properly, can end, a Moor.
Beside, there 's something makes me understand
Your nature: I have seen it.
*Domizia.* Aught like mine?
*Luria.* In my own East . . . if you would stoop and help

My barbarous illustration! It sounds ill;
Yet there 's no wrong at bottom: rather, praise.
*Domizia.* Well?
*Luria.* We have creatures there, which if you saw
The first time, you would doubtless marvel at
For their surpassing beauty, craft and strength.
And though it were a lively moment's shock
When you first found the purpose of forked tongues
That seem innocuous in their lambent play,
Yet, once made know such grace requires such guard,
Your reason soon would acquiesce, I think,
In wisdom which made all things for the best —
So, take them, good with ill, contentedly,
The prominent beauty with the latent sting.
I am glad to have seen you wondrous Florentines:
Yet . . .
*Domizia.* I am here to listen.
*Luria.* My own East!
How nearer God we were! He glows above
With scarce an intervention, presses close
And palpitatingly, his soul o'er ours:
We feel him, nor by painful reason know!
The everlasting minute of creation
Is felt there; now it is, as it was then;
All changes at his instantaneous will,
Not by the operation of a law
Whose maker is elsewhere at other work.
His hand is still engaged upon his world —
Man's praise can forward it, man's prayer suspend,
For is not God all-mighty? To recast
The world, erase old things and make them new,
What costs it Him? So, man breathes nobly there.
And inasmuch as feeling, the East's gift,
Is quick and transient — comes, and lo, is gone —

While Northern thought is slow and durable,
Surely a mission was reserved for me,
Who, born with a perception of the power
And use of the North's thought for us of the East,
Should have remained, turned knowledge to account,
Giving thought's character and permanence
To the too transitory feeling there —
Writing God's message plain in mortal words.
Instead of which, I leave my fated field
For this where such a task is needed least,
Where all are born consummate in the art
I just perceive a chance of making mine, —
And then, deserting thus my early post,
I wonder that the men I come among
Mistake me! There, how all had understood,
Still brought fresh stuff for me to stamp and keep,
Fresh instinct to translate them into law!
Me, who . . .

*Domizia.* Who here the greater task achieve,
More needful even: who have brought fresh stuff
For us to mould, interpret and prove right, —
New feeling fresh from God, which, could we know
O' the instant, where had been our need of it?
— Whose life re-teaches us what life should be,
What faith is, loyalty and simpleness,
All, once revealed but taught us so long since
That, having mere tradition of the fact, —
Truth copied falteringly from copies faint,
The early traits all dropped away, — we said
On sight of faith like yours, "So looks not faith
We understand, described and praised before."
But still, the feat was dared; and though at first
It suffered from our haste, yet trace by trace
Old memories reappear, old truth returns,

Our slow thought does its work, and all 's re-known.
Oh noble Luria ! What you have decreed
I see not, but no animal revenge,
No brute-like punishment of bad by worse —
It cannot be, the gross and vulgar way
Traced for me by convention and mistake,
Has gained that calm approving eye and brow !
Spare Florence, after all ! Let Luria trust
To his own soul, he whom I trust with mine !

*Luria.* In time !

*Domizia.* How, Luria ?

*Luria.* It is midnight now,
And they arrive from Florence with my fate.

*Domizia.* I hear no step.

*Luria.* I feel one, as you say.

*Enter* HUSAIN.

*Husain.* The man returned from Florence !

*Luria.* As I knew.

*Husain.* He seeks thee.

*Luria.* And I only wait for him.
Aught else ?

*Husain.* A movement of the Lucchese troops
Southward —

*Luria.* Toward Florence ? Have out instantly . . .
Ah, old use clings ! Puccio must care henceforth.
In — quick — 't is nearly midnight ! Bid him come !

*Enter* TIBURZIO, BRACCIO, *and* PUCCIO.

Tiburzio ? — not at Pisa ?

*Tiburzio.* I return
From Florence : I serve Pisa, and must think
By such procedure I have served her best.
A people is but the attempt of many

To rise to the completer life of one ;
And those who live as models for the mass
Are singly of more value than they all.
Such man are you, and such a time is this,
That your sole fate concerns a nation more
Than much apparent welfare : that to prove
Your rectitude, and duly crown the same,
Imports us far beyond to-day's event,
A battle's loss or gain : man's mass remains, —
Keep but God's model safe, new men will rise
To take its mould, and other days to prove
How great a good was Luria's glory. True —
I might go try my fortune as you urged,
And, joining Lucca, helped by your disgrace,
Repair our harm — so were to-day's work done ;
But where leave Luria for our sons to see ?
No, I look farther. I have testified
(Declaring my submission to your arms)
Her full success to Florence, making clear
Your probity, as none else could : I spoke,
And out it shone !

*Luria.* Ah — until Braccio spoke !

*Braccio.* Till Braccio told in just a word the whole —

His lapse to error, his return to knowledge :
Which told . . . Nay, Luria, *I* should droop the head,
I whom shame rests with ! Yet I dare look up,
Sure of your pardon now I sue for it,
Knowing you wholly. Let the midnight end !
'T is morn approaches ! Still you answer not ?
Sunshine succeeds the shadow past away ;
Our faces, which phantasmal grew and false,
Are all that felt it : they change round you, turn

Truly themselves now in its vanishing.
Speak, Luria! Here begins your true career:
Look up, advance! All now is possible,
Fact's grandeur, no false dreaming! Dare and do!
And every prophecy shall be fulfilled
Save one — (nay, now your word must come at last)
— That you would punish Florence!

*Husain* [*pointing to* LURIA's *dead body*]. That is done.

# A SOUL'S TRAGEDY.

1846.

ACT FIRST, BEING WHAT WAS CALLED THE POETRY OF CHIAPPINO'S LIFE: AND ACT SECOND, ITS PROSE.

*PERSONS.*

LUITOLFO *and* EULALIA, *betrothed lovers.*
CHIAPPINO, *their friend.*
OGNIBEN, *the Pope's Legate.*
*Citizens of Faenza.*

TIME, 15—. PLACE, *Faenza.*

## ACT I.

SCENE. — *Inside* LUITOLFO'S *house.*

CHIAPPINO, EULALIA.

*Eulalia.* What is it keeps Luitolfo? Night's fast falling,
And 't was scarce sunset . . . had the ave-bell
Sounded before he sought the Provost's house?
I think not: all he had to say would take
Few minutes, such a very few, to say!
How do you think, Chiappino? If our lord
The Provost were less friendly to your friend
Than everybody here professes him,
I should begin to tremble — should not you?
Why are you silent when so many times
I turn and speak to you?

*Chiappino.* That 's good !
*Eulalia.* You laugh !
*Chiappino.* Yes. I had fancied nothing that bears price
In the whole world was left to call my own ;
And, may be, felt a little pride thereat.
Up to a single man's or woman's love,
Down to the right in my own flesh and blood,
There 's nothing mine, I fancied, — till you spoke :
— Counting, you see, as " nothing " the permission
To study this peculiar lot of mine
In silence : well, go silence with the rest
Of the world's good ! What can I say, shall serve ?
*Eulalia.* This, — lest you, even more than needs, embitter
Our parting : say your wrongs have cast, for once,
A cloud across your spirit !
*Chiappino.* How a cloud ?
*Eulalia.* No man nor woman loves you, did you say ?
*Chiappino.* My God, were 't not for thee !
*Eulalia.* Ay, God remains,
Even did men forsake you.
*Chiappino.* Oh, not so !
Were 't not for God, I mean, what hope of truth —
Speaking truth, hearing truth, would stay with man ?
I, now — the homeless friendless penniless
Proscribed and exiled wretch who speak to you, —
Ought to speak truth, yet could not, for my death,
(The thing that tempts me most) help speaking lies
About your friendship and Luitolfo's courage
And all our townsfolk's equanimity —
Through sheer incompetence to rid myself
Of the old miserable lying trick

Caught from the liars I have lived with, — God,
Did I not turn to thee ! It is thy prompting
I dare to be ashamed of, and thy counsel
Would die along my coward lip, I know.
But I do turn to thee. This craven tongue,
These features which refuse the soul its way,
Reclaim thou ! Give me truth — truth, power to speak —
And after be sole present to approve
The spoken truth ! Or, stay, that spoken truth,
Who knows but you, too, may approve ?
*Eulalia.* Ah, well —
Keep silence then, Chiappino !
*Chiappino.* You would hear,
You shall now, — why the thing we please to style
My gratitude to you and all your friends
For service done me, is just gratitude
So much as yours was service : no whit more.
I was born here, so was Luitolfo ; both
At one time, much with the same circumstance
Of rank and wealth ; and both, up to this night
Of parting company, have side by side
Still fared, he in the sunshine — I, the shadow.
" Why ? " asks the world. " Because," replies the world
To its complacent self, " these playfellows,
Who took at church the holy-water drop
Each from the other's finger, and so forth, —
Were of two moods : Luitolfo was the proper
Friend-making, everywhere friend-finding soul,
Fit for the sunshine, so, it followed him.
A happy-tempered bringer of the best
Out of the worst ; who bears with what 's past cure,
And puts so good a face on 't — wisely passive

Where action 's fruitless, while he remedies
In silence what the foolish rail against ;
A man to smooth such natures as parade
Of opposition must exasperate ;
No general gauntlet-gatherer for the weak
Against the strong, yet over-scrupulous
At lucky junctures ; one who won't forego
The after-battle work of binding wounds,
Because, forsooth he 'd have to bring himself
To side with wound-inflictors for their leave ! "
— Why do you gaze, nor help me to repeat
What comes so glibly from the common mouth,
About Luitolfo and his so-styled friend ?
*Eulalia.* Because that friend's sense is obscured . . .
*Chiappino.* I thought
You would be readier with the other half
Of the world's story, my half ! Yet, 't is true.
For all the world does say it. Say your worst !
True, I thank God, I ever said " you sin,"
When a man did sin : if I could not say it,
I glared it at him ; if I could not glare it,
I prayed against him ; then my part seemed over.
God's may begin yet : so it will, I trust.
*Eulalia.* If the world outraged you, did we ?
*Chiappino.* What 's " me "
That you use well or ill ? It 's man, in me,
All your successes are an outrage to,
You all, whom sunshine follows, as you say !
Here 's our Faenza birthplace ; they send here
A provost from Ravenna : how he rules,
You can at times be eloquent about.
" Then, end his rule ! " — " Ah yes, one stroke does that !
But patience under wrong works slow and sure.

Must violence still bring peace forth? He, beside,
Returns so blandly one's obeisance! ah —
Some latent virtue may be lingering yet,
Some human sympathy which, once excite,
And all the lump were leavened quietly:
So, no more talk of striking, for this time!"
But I, as one of those he rules, won't bear
These pretty takings-up and layings-down
Our cause, just as you think occasion suits.
Enough of earnest, is there? You 'll play, will you?
Diversify your tactics, give submission,
Obsequiousness and flattery a turn,
While we die in our misery patient deaths?
We all are outraged then, and I the first:
I, for mankind, resent each shrug and smirk,
Each beck and bend, each . . . all you do and are,
I hate!

*Eulalia.* We share a common censure, then.
'T is well you have not poor Luitolfo's part
Nor mine to point out in the wide offence.

*Chiappino.* Oh, shall I let you so escape me, lady?
Come, on your own ground, lady, — from yourself,
(Leaving the people's wrong, which most is mine)
What have I got to be so grateful for?
These three last fines, no doubt, one on the other
Paid by Luitolfo?

*Eulalia.* Shame, Chiappino!

*Chiappino.* Shame
Fall presently on who deserves it most!
— Which is to see. He paid my fines — my friend,
Your prosperous smooth lover presently,
Then, scarce your wooer, — soon, your husband: well —
I loved you.

*Eulalia.* Hold!
*Chiappino.* You knew it, years ago.
When my voice faltered and my eye grew dim
Because you gave me your silk mask to hold — 130
My voice that greatens when there 's need to curse
The people's Provost to their heart's content,
— My eye, the Provost, who bears all men's eyes,
Banishes now because he cannot bear, —
You knew . . . but you do your parts — my part, I:
So be it! You flourish, I decay: all 's well.
*Eulalia.* I hear this for the first time.
*Chiappino.* The fault 's there?
Then my days spoke not, and my nights of fire
Were voiceless? Then the very heart may burst,
Yet all prove naught, because no mincing speech 140
Tells leisurely that thus it is and thus?
Eulalia, truce with toying for this once!
A banished fool, who troubles you to-night
For the last time — why, what 's to fear from me?
You knew I loved you!
*Eulalia.* Not so, on my faith!
You were my now-affianced lover's friend —
Came in, went out with him, could speak as he.
All praise your ready parts and pregnant wit;
See how your words come from you in a crowd!
Luitolfo 's first to place you o'er himself 150
In all that challenges respect and love:
Yet you were silent then, who blame me now.
I say all this by fascination, sure:
I, all but wed to one I love, yet listen!
It must be, you are wronged, and that the wrongs
Luitolfo pities . . .
*Chiappino.* — You too pity? Do!
But hear first what my wrongs are; so began

This talk and so shall end this talk. I say,
Was't not enough that I must strive (I saw)
To grow so far familiar with your charms
As next contrive some way to win them — which
To do, an age seemed far too brief — for, see!
We all aspire to heaven; and there lies heaven
Above us: go there! Dare we go? no, surely!
How dare we go without a reverent pause,
A growing less unfit for heaven? Just so,
I dared not speak: the greater fool, it seems!
Was 't not enough to struggle with such folly,
But I must have, beside, the very man
Whose slight free loose and incapacious soul
Gave his tongue scope to say whate'er he would
— Must have him load me with his benefits
— For fortune's fiercest stroke?

*Eulalia.* Justice to him
That 's now entreating, at his risk perhaps,
Justice for you! Did he once call those acts
Of simple friendship — bounties, benefits?

*Chiappino.* No: the straight course had been to call them thus.

Then, I had flung them back, and kept myself
Unhampered, free as he to win the prize
We both sought. But "the gold was dross," he said:
"He loved me, and I loved him not: why spurn
A trifle out of superfluity?
He had forgotten he had done as much."
So had not I! Henceforth, try as I could
To take him at his word, there stood by you
My benefactor; who might speak and laugh
And urge his nothings, even banter me
Before you — but my tongue was tied. A dream!

Let 's wake : your husband . . . how you shake at
that!
Good — my revenge!
*Eulalia.* Why should I shake? What forced
Or forces me to be Luitolfo's bride?
*Chiappino.* There 's my revenge, that nothing forces
you.
No gratitude, no liking of the eye
Nor longing of the heart, but the poor bond
Of habit — here so many times he came,
So much he spoke, — all these compose the tie
That pulls you from me. Well, he paid my fines,
Nor missed a cloak from wardrobe, dish from table ;
He spoke a good word to the Provost here,
Held me up when my fortunes fell away
— It had not looked so well to let me drop —
Men take pains to preserve a tree-stump, even,
Whose boughs they played beneath — much more a
friend.
But one grows tired of seeing, after the first,
Pains spent upon impracticable stuff
Like me. I could not change: you know the rest.
I 've spoke my mind too fully out, by chance,
This morning to our Provost ; so, ere night
I leave the city on pain of death. And now
On my account there 's gallant intercession
Goes forward — that 's so graceful! — and anon
He 'll noisily come back: " the intercession
Was made and fails ; all 's over for us both ;
'T is vain contending ; I would better go."
And I do go — and straight to you he turns
Light of a load ; and ease of that permits
His visage to repair the natural bland
Œconomy, sore broken late to suit

My discontent. Thus, all are pleased — you, with him,
He with himself, and all of you with me
— "Who," say the citizens, "had done far better
In letting people sleep upon their woes,
If not possessed with talent to relieve them
When once awake; — but then I had," they 'll say,
"Doubtless some unknown compensating pride
In what I did; and as I seem content
With ruining myself, why, so should they be."
And so they are, and so be with his prize
The devil, when he gets them speedily!
Why does not your Luitolfo come? I long
To don this cloak and take the Lugo path.
It seems you never loved me, then?

*Eulalia.* Chiappino!

*Chiappino.* Never?

*Eulalia.* Never.

*Chiappino.* That 's sad. Say what I might,
There was no help from being sure this while
You loved me. Love like mine must have return,
I thought: no river starts but to some sea.
And had you loved me, I could soon devise
Some specious reason why you stifled love,
Some fancied self-denial on your part,
Which made you choose Luitolfo; so, excepting
From the wide condemnation of all here,
One woman. Well, the other dream may break!
If I knew any heart, as mine loved you,
Loved me, though in the vilest breast 't were lodged,
I should, I think, be forced to love again:
Else there 's no right nor reason in the world.

*Eulalia.* "If you knew," say you, — but I did not know.
That 's where you 're blind, Chiappino! — a disease

Which if I may remove, I'll not repent
The listening to. You cannot, will not, see
How, place you but in every circumstance
Of us, you are just now indignant at,
You'd be as we.
*Chiappino.* I should be? . . . that; again!
I, to my friend, my country and my love,
Be as Luitolfo and these Faentines?
*Eulalia.* As we.
*Chiappino.* Now, I'll say something to remember.
I trust in nature for the stable laws
Of beauty and utility. — Spring shall plant,
And Autumn garner to the end of time:
I trust in God — the right shall be the right
And other than the wrong, while he endures:
I trust in my own soul, that can perceive
The outward and the inward, nature's good
And God's: so, seeing these men and myself,
Having a right to speak, thus do I speak.
I'll not curse — God bears with them, well may I —
But I — protest against their claiming me.
I simply say, if that's allowable,
I would not (broadly) do as they have done.
— God curse this townful of born slaves, bred slaves,
Branded into the blood and bone, slaves! Curse
Whoever loves, above his liberty,
House, land or life! and . . . [*A knocking without.*
— bless my hero-friend,
Luitolfo!
*Eulalia.* How he knocks!
*Chiappino.* The peril, lady!
"Chiappino, I have run a risk — a risk!
For when I prayed the Provost (he's my friend)
To grant you a week's respite of the sentence

That confiscates your goods, exiles yourself,
He shrugged his shoulder — I say, shrugged it! Yes,
And fright of that drove all else from my head.
Here 's a good purse of *scudi:* off with you,
Lest of that shrug come what God only knows!
The *scudi* — friend, they 're trash — no thanks, I beg!
Take the north gate, — for San Vitale's suburb,
Whose double taxes you appealed against,
In discomposure at your ill-success
Is apt to stone you: there, there — only go!
Beside, Eulalia here looks sleepily.
Shake . . . oh, you hurt me, so you squeeze my wrist!"
— Is it not thus you 'll speak, adventurous friend?
[*As he opens the door,* LUITOLFO *rushes in, his garments disordered.*
*Eulalia.* Luitolfo! Blood?
*Luitolfo.* There 's more — and more of it!
Eulalia — take the garment! No — you, friend!
You take it and the blood from me — you dare!
*Eulalia.* Oh, who has hurt you? where 's the wound?
*Chiappino.* "Who," say you?
The man with many a touch of virtue yet!
The Provost's friend has proved too frank of speech,
And this comes of it. Miserable hound!
This comes of temporizing, as I said!
Here 's fruit of your smooth speeches and soft looks!
Now see my way! As God lives, I go straight
To the palace and do justice, once for all!
*Luitolfo.* What says he?
*Chiappino.* I 'll do justice on him.
*Luitolfo.* Him?
*Chiappino.* The Provost.

*Luitolfo.* I 've just killed him.
*Eulalia.* Oh, my God!
*Luitolfo.* My friend, they 're on my trace; they 'll have me — now!
They 're round him, busy with him: soon they 'll find
He 's past their help, and then they 'll be on me!
Chiappino, save Eulalia! I forget . . .
Were you not bound for . . .
*Chiappino.* Lugo?
*Luitolfo.* Ah — yes — yes!
That was the point I prayed of him to change.
Well, go — be happy! Is Eulalia safe?
They 're on me!
*Chiappino.* 'T is through me they reach you, then!
Friend, seem the man you are! Lock arms — that 's right!
Now tell me what you 've done; explain how you
That still professed forbearance, still preached peace,
Could bring yourself . . .
*Luitolfo.* What was peace for, Chiappino?
I tried peace: did that promise, when peace failed,
Strife should not follow? All my peaceful days
Were just the prelude to a day like this.
I cried "You call me 'friend': save my true friend!
Save him, or lose me!"
*Chiappino.* But you never said
You meant to tell the Provost thus and thus.
*Luitolfo.* Why should I say it? What else did I mean?
*Chiappino.* Well? He persisted?
*Luitolfo.* — "Would so order it
You should not trouble him too soon again."
I saw a meaning in his eye and lip;
I poured my heart's store of indignant words

Out on him: then — I know not! He retorted,
And I . . . some staff lay there to hand — I think
He bade his servants thrust me out — I struck . . .
Ah, they come! Fly you, save yourselves, you two!
The dead back-weight of the beheading axe!
The glowing trip-hook, thumbscrews and the gadge!
*Eulalia.* They do come! Torches in the Place!
Farewell,
Chiappino! You can work no good to us —
Much to yourself; believe not, all the world
Must needs be cursed henceforth!
*Chiappino.* And you?
*Eulalia.* I stay.
*Chiappino.* Ha, ha! Now, listen! I am master here!
This was my coarse disguise; this paper shows
My path of flight and place of refuge — see —
Lugo, Argenta, past San Nicolo,
Ferrara, then to Venice and all's safe!
Put on the cloak! His people have to fetch
A compass round about. There's time enough
Ere they can reach us, so you straightway make
For Lugo . . . nay, he hears not! On with it —
The cloak, Luitolfo, do you hear me? See —
He obeys he knows not how. Then, if I must —
Answer me! Do you know the Lugo gate?
*Eulalia.* The north-west gate, over the bridge?
*Luitolfo.* I know.
*Chiappino.* Well, there — you are not frightened? all my route
Is traced in that: at Venice you escape
Their power. Eulalia, I am master here!
[*Shouts from without. He pushes out* LUITOLFO, *who complies mechanically.*
In time! Nay, help me with him — so! He's gone.

*Eulalia.* What have you done? On you, perchance, all know
The Provost's hater, will men's vengeance fall
As our accomplice.
*Chiappino.* Mere accomplice? See!
[*Putting on* LUITOLFO'S *vest.*
Now, lady, am I true to my profession,
Or one of these?
*Eulalia.* You take Luitolfo's place?
*Chiappino.* Die for him.
*Eulalia.* Well done!
[*Shouts increase.*
*Chiappino.* How the people tarry!
I can't be silent; I must speak: or sing — 360
How natural to sing now!
*Eulalia.* Hush and pray!
We are to die; but even I perceive
'T is not a very hard thing so to die.
My cousin of the pale-blue tearful eyes,
Poor Cesca, suffers more from one day's life
With the stern husband; Tisbe's heart goes forth
Each evening after that wild son of hers,
To track his thoughtless footstep through the streets:
How easy for them both to die like this!
I am not sure that I could live as they. 370
*Chiappino.* Here they come, crowds! They pass the gate? Yes! — No! —
One torch is in the courtyard. Here flock all.
*Eulalia.* At least Luitolfo has escaped. What cries!
*Chiappino.* If they would drag one to the market-place,
One might speak there!
*Eulalia.* List, list!
*Chiappino.* They mount the steps.

*Enter the* Populace.

*Chiappino.* I killed the Provost !
*The Populace* [*speaking together*]. 'T was Chiappino, friends !
Our savior ! The best man at last as first !
He who first made us feel what chains we wore,
He also strikes the blow that shatters them,
He at last saves us — our best citizen !
— Oh, have you only courage to speak now ?
My eldest son was christened a year since
"Cino" to keep Chiappino's name in mind —
Cino, for shortness merely, you observe !
The city 's in our hands. The guards are fled.
Do you, the cause of all, come down — come up —
Come out to counsel us, our chief, our king,
Whate'er rewards you ! Choose your own reward !
The peril over, its reward begins !
Come and harangue us in the market-place !
*Eulalia.* Chiappino ?
*Chiappino.* Yes — I understand your eyes !
You think I should have promptlier disowned
This deed with its strange unforeseen success,
In favor of Luitolfo. But the peril,
So far from ended, hardly seems begun.
To-morrow, rather, when a calm succeeds,
We easily shall make him full amends :
And meantime — if we save them as they pray,
And justify the deed by its effects ?
*Eulalia.* You would, for worlds, you had denied at once.
*Chiappino.* I know my own intention, be assured !
All 's well. Precede us, fellow-citizens !

## ACT II.

Scene. — *The market-place.* Luitolfo *in disguise mingling with the* Populace *assembled opposite the* Provost's *Palace.*

*1st Bystander* [*to* Luitolfo]. You, a friend of Luitolfo's? Then, your friend is vanished, — in all probability killed on the night that his patron the tyrannical Provost was loyally suppressed here, exactly a month ago, by our illustrious fellow-citizen, thrice-noble savior, and new Provost that is like to be, this very morning, — Chiappino!

*Luitolfo.* He the new Provost?

*2nd Bystander.* Up those steps will he go, and beneath yonder pillar stand, while Ogniben, the Pope's Legate from Ravenna, reads the new dignitary's title to the people, according to established custom: for which reason, there is the assemblage you inquire about.

*Luitolfo.* Chiappino — the late Provost's successor? Impossible! But tell me of that presently. What I would know first of all is, wherefore Luitolfo must so necessarily have been killed on that memorable night?

*3rd Bystander.* You were Luitolfo's friend? So was I. Never, if you will credit me, did there exist so poor-spirited a milksop. He, with all the opportunities in the world, furnished by daily converse with our oppressor, would not stir a finger to help us: and, when Chiappino rose in solitary majesty and . . . how does one go on saying? . . . dealt the godlike blow, — this Luitolfo, not unreason-

ably fearing the indignation of an aroused and liberated people, fled precipitately. He may have got trodden to death in the press at the south-east gate, when the Provost's guards fled through it to Ravenna, with their wounded master, — if he did not rather hang himself under some hedge.

*Luitolfo.* Or why not simply have lain perdue in some quiet corner, — such as San Cassiano, where his estate was, — receiving daily intelligence from some sure friend, meanwhile, as to the turn matters were taking here — how, for instance, the Provost was not dead, after all, only wounded — or, as to-day's news would seem to prove, how Chi- appino was not Brutus the Elder, after all, only the new Provost — and thus Luitolfo be enabled to watch a favorable opportunity for returning? Might it not have been so?

*3rd Bystander.* Why, he may have taken that care of himself, certainly, for he came of a cautious stock. I 'll tell you how his uncle, just such another gingerly treader on tiptoes with finger on lip, — how he met his death in the great plague-year: *dico vobis!* Hearing that the seventeenth house in a certain street was infected, he calculates to pass it in safety by taking plentiful breath, say, when he shall arrive at the eleventh house; then scouring by, holding that breath, till he be got so far on the other side as number twenty-three, and thus elude the danger. — And so did he begin; but, as he arrived at thirteen, we will say, — thinking to improve on his precaution by putting up a little prayer to St. Nepomucene of Prague, this exhausted so much of his lungs' reserve, that at sixteen it was clean spent, — consequently at the fatal seventeen he

inhaled with a vigor and persistence enough to suck you any latent venom out of the heart of a stone — Ha, ha!

*Luitolfo* [*aside*]. (If I had not lent that man the money he wanted last spring, I should fear this bitterness was attributable to me.) Luitolfo is dead then, one may conclude?

*3rd Bystander*. Why, he had a house here, and a woman to whom he was affianced; and as they both pass naturally to the new Provost, his friend and heir . . .

*Luitolfo*. Ah, I suspected you of imposing on me with your pleasantry! I know Chiappino better.

*1st Bystander*. (Our friend has the bile! After all, I do not dislike finding somebody vary a little this general gape of admiration at Chiappino's glorious qualities.) Pray, how much may you know of what has taken place in Faenza since that memorable night?

*Luitolfo*. It is most to the purpose, that I know Chiappino to have been by profession a hater of that very office of Provost, you now charge him with proposing to accept.

*1st Bystander*. Sir, I'll tell you. That night was indeed memorable. Up we rose, a mass of us, men, women, children; out fled the guards with the body of the tyrant; we were to defy the world: but, next gray morning, "What will Rome say?" began everybody. You know we are governed by Ravenna, which is governed by Rome. And quietly into the town, by the Ravenna road, comes on muleback a portly personage, Ogniben by name, with the quality of Pontifical Legate; trots briskly through the streets humming a "*Cur fremuere gentes*,"

and makes directly for the Provost's Palace — there it faces you. "One Messer Chiappino is your leader? I have known three-and-twenty leaders of revolts!" (laughing gently to himself) — "Give me the help of your arm from my mule to yonder steps under the pillar — So! And now, my revolters and good friends, what do you want? The guards burst into Ravenna last night bearing your wounded Provost; and, having had a little talk with him, I take on myself to come and try appease the disorderliness, before Rome, hearing of it, resort to another method: 't is I come, and not another, from a certain love I confess to, of composing differences. So, do you understand, you are about to experience this unheard-of tyranny from me, that there shall be no heading nor hanging, no confiscation nor exile: I insist on your simply pleasing yourselves. And now, pray, what does please you? To live without any government at all? Or having decided for one, to see its minister murdered by the first of your body that chooses to find himself wronged, or disposed for reverting to first principles and a justice anterior to all institutions, — and so will you carry matters, that the rest of the world must at length unite and put down such a den of wild beasts? As for vengeance on what has just taken place, — once for all, the wounded man assures me he cannot conjecture who struck him; and this so earnestly, that one may be sure he knows perfectly well what intimate acquaintance could find admission to speak with him late last evening. I come not for vengeance therefore, but from pure curiosity to hear what you will do next." And thus he ran on, on, easily and volubly, till he seemed to arrive quite naturally at

the praise of law, order, and paternal government by somebody from rather a distance. All our citizens were in the snare, and about to be friends with so congenial an adviser; but that Chiappino suddenly stood forth, spoke out indignantly, and set things right again.

*Luitolfo.* Do you see? I recognize him there!

*3rd Bystander.* Ay but, mark you, at the end of Chiappino's longest period in praise of a pure republic, — "And by whom do I desire such a government should be administered, perhaps, but by one like yourself?" — returns the Legate: thereupon speaking for a quarter of an hour together, on the natural and only legitimate government by the best and wisest. And it should seem there was soon discovered to be no such vast discrepancy at bottom between this and Chiappino's theory, place but each in its proper light. "Oh, are you there?" quoth Chiappino: "Ay, in that, I agree," returns Chiappino: and so on.

*Luitolfo.* But did Chiappino cede at once to this?

*1st Bystander.* Why, not altogether at once. For instance, he said that the difference between him and all his fellows was, that they seemed all wishing to be kings in one or another way, — "whereas what right," asked he, "has any man to wish to be superior to another?" — whereat, "Ah, sir," answers the Legate, "this is the death of me, so often as I expect something is really going to be revealed to us by you clearer-seers, deeper-thinkers — this — that your right-hand (to speak by a figure) should be found taking up the weapon it displayed so ostentatiously, not to destroy any dragon in

our path, as was prophesied, but simply to cut off its own fellow left-hand: yourself set about attacking yourself. For see now! Here are you who, I make sure, glory exceedingly in knowing the noble nature of the soul, its divine impulses, and so forth; and with such a knowledge you stand, as it were, armed to encounter the natural doubts and fears as to that same inherent nobility, which are apt to waylay us, the weaker ones, in the road of life. And when we look eagerly to see them fall before you, lo, round you wheel, only the left-hand gets the blow; one proof of the soul's nobility destroys simply another proof, quite as good, of the same, for you are found delivering an opinion like this! Why, what is this perpetual yearning to exceed, to subdue, to be better than, and a king over, one's fellows, — all that you so disclaim, — but the very tendency yourself are most proud of, and under another form, would oppose to it, — only in a lower stage of manifestation? You don't want to be vulgarly superior to your fellows after their poor fashion — to have me hold solemnly up your gown's tail, or hand you an express of the last importance from the Pope, with all these bystanders noticing how unconcerned you look the while: but neither does our gaping friend, the burgess yonder, want the other kind of kingship, that consists in understanding better than his fellows this and similar points of human nature, nor to roll under his tongue this sweeter morsel still, — the feeling that, through immense philosophy, he does *not* feel, he rather thinks, above you and me!" And so chatting, they glided off arm-in-arm.

*Luitolfo.* And the result is . . .

*1st Bystander.* Why that, a month having gone by, the indomitable Chiappino, marrying as he will Luitolfo's love — at all events succeeding to Luitolfo's wealth — becomes the first inhabitant of Faenza, and a proper aspirant to the Provostship; which we assemble here to see conferred on him this morning. The Legate's Guard to clear the way! He will follow presently.

*Luitolfo* [*withdrawing a little*]. I understand the drift of Eulalia's communications less than ever. Yet she surely said, in so many words, that Chiappino was in urgent danger: wherefore, disregarding her injunction to continue in my retreat and await the result of — what she called, some experiment yet in process — I hastened here without her leave or knowledge: how could I else? But if this they say be true — if it were for such a purpose, she and Chiappino kept me away . . . Oh, no, no! I must confront him and her before I believe this of them. And at the word, see!

*Enter* CHIAPPINO *and* EULALIA.

*Eulalia.* We part here, then? The change in your principles would seem to be complete.

*Chiappino.* Now, why refuse to see that in my present course I change no principles, only re-adapt them and more adroitly? I had despaired of, what you may call the material instrumentality of life; of ever being able to rightly operate on mankind through such a deranged machinery as the existing modes of government: but now, if I suddenly discover how to inform these perverted institutions with fresh purpose, bring the functionary limbs once more into immediate communication with, and subjection

to, the soul I am about to bestow on them — do you see? Why should one desire to invent, as long as it remains possible to renew and transform? When all further hope of the old organization shall be extinct, then, I grant you, it may be time to try and create another.

*Eulalia.* And there being discoverable some hope yet in the hitherto much-abused old system of absolute government by a Provost here, you mean to take your time about endeavoring to realize those visions of a perfect State, we once heard of?

*Chiappino.* Say, I would fain realize my conception of a palace, for instance, and that there is, abstractedly, but a single way of erecting one perfectly. Here, in the market-place is my allotted building-ground; here I stand without a stone to lay, or a laborer to help me, — stand, too, during a short day of life, close on which the night comes. On the other hand, circumstances suddenly offer me (turn and see it!) the old Provost's house to experiment upon — ruinous, if you please, wrongly constructed at the beginning, and ready to tumble now. But materials abound, a crowd of workmen offer their services; here, exists yet a Hall of Audience of originally noble proportions, there a Guest-chamber of symmetrical design enough: and I may restore, enlarge, abolish or unite these to heart's content. Ought I not make the best of such an opportunity, rather than continue to gaze disconsolately with folded arms on the flat pavement here, while the sun goes slowly down, never to rise again? Since you cannot understand this nor me, it is better we should part as you desire.

*Eulalia.* So, the love breaks away too!

*Chiappino.* No, rather my soul's capacity for love widens — needs more than one object to content it, — and, being better instructed, will not persist in seeing all the component parts of love in what is only a single part, — nor in finding that so many and so various loves are all united in the love of a woman, — manifold uses in one instrument, as the savage has his sword, staff, sceptre and idol, all in one club-stick. Love is a very compound thing. The intellectual part of my love I shall give to men, the mighty dead or the illustrious living; and determine to call a mere sensual instinct by as few fine names as possible. What do I lose?

*Eulalia.* Nay, I only think, what do I lose? and, one more word — which shall complete my instruction — does friendship go too? What of Luitolfo, the author of your present prosperity?

*Chiappino.* How the author?

*Eulalia.* That blow now called yours . . .

*Chiappino.* Struck without principle or purpose, as by a blind natural operation: yet to which all my thought and life directly and advisedly tended. I would have struck it, and could not: he would have done his utmost to avoid striking it, yet did so. I dispute his right to that deed of mine — a final action with him, from the first effect of which he fled away, — a mere first step with me, on which I base a whole mighty superstructure of good to follow. Could he get good from it?

*Eulalia.* So we profess, so we perform!

*Enter* Ogniben. Eulalia *stands apart.*

*Ogniben.* I have seen three-and-twenty leaders of revolts. By your leave, sir! Perform? What does the lady say of performing?

*Chiappino.* Only the trite saying, that we must not trust profession, only performance.

*Ogniben.* She 'll not say that, sir, when she knows you longer; you 'll instruct her better. Ever judge of men by their professions! For though the bright moment of promising is but a moment and cannot be prolonged, yet, if sincere in its moment's extravagant goodness, why, trust it and know the man by it, I say — not by his performance; which is half the world's work, interfere as the world needs must, with its accidents and circumstances: the profession was purely the man's own. I judge people by what they might be, — not are, nor will be.

*Chiappino.* But have there not been found, too, performing natures, not merely promising?

*Ogniben.* Plenty. Little Bindo of our town, for instance, promised his friend, great ugly Masaccio, once, "I will repay you!" — for a favor done him. So, when his father came to die, and Bindo succeeded to the inheritance, he sends straightway for Masaccio and shares all with him — gives him half the land, half the money, half the kegs of wine in the cellar. "Good," say you: and it is good. But had little Bindo found himself possessor of all this wealth some five years before — on the happy night when Masaccio procured him that interview in the garden with his pretty cousin Lisa — instead of being the beggar he then was, — I am bound to believe that in the warm moment of promise he would have given away all the wine-kegs and all the money and all the land, and only reserved to himself some hut on a hill-top hard by, whence he might spend his life in looking and seeing his friend enjoy himself: he meant fully that much, but

the world interfered. — To our business ! Did I understand you just now within-doors ? You are not going to marry your old friend's love, after all ?

*Chiappino.* I must have a woman that can sympathize with, and appreciate me, I told you.

*Ogniben.* Oh, I remember ! you, the greater nature, needs must have a lesser one (— avowedly lesser — contest with you on that score would never do) — such a nature must comprehend you, as the phrase is, accompany and testify of your greatness from point to point onward. Why, that were being not merely as great as yourself, but greater considerably ! Meantime, might not the more bounded nature as reasonably count on your appreciation of it, rather ? — on your keeping close by it, so far as you both go together, and then going on by yourself as far as you please ? Thus God serves us.

*Chiappino.* And yet a woman that could understand the whole of me, to whom I could reveal alike the strength and the weakness —

*Ogniben.* Ah, my friend, wish for nothing so foolish ! Worship your love, give her the best of you to see ; be to her like the western lands (they bring us such strange news of ) to the Spanish Court ; send her only your lumps of gold, fans of feathers, your spirit-like birds, and fruits and gems ! So shall you, what is unseen of you, be supposed altogether a paradise by her, — as these western lands by Spain : though I warrant there is filth, red baboons, ugly reptiles and squalor enough, which they bring Spain as few samples of as possible. Do you want your mistress to respect your body generally ? Offer her your mouth to kiss : don't strip off your boot and put your foot to her lips ! You under-

stand my humor by this time? I help men to carry out their own principles: if they please to say two and two make five, I assent, so they will but go on and say, four and four make ten.

*Chiappino.* But these are my private affairs; what I desire you to occupy yourself about, is my public appearance presently: for when the people hear that I am appointed Provost, though you and I may thoroughly discern — and easily, too — the right principle at bottom of such a movement, and how my republicanism remains thoroughly unaltered, only takes a form of expression hitherto commonly judged (and heretofore by myself) incompatible with its existence, — when thus I reconcile myself to an old form of government instead of proposing a new one . . .

*Ogniben.* Why, you must deal with people broadly. Begin at a distance from this matter and say, — New truths, old truths! sirs, there is nothing new possible to be revealed to us in the moral world; we know all we shall ever know: and it is for simply reminding us, by their various respective expedients, how we do know this and the other matter, that men get called prophets, poets and the like. A philosopher's life is spent in discovering that, of the half-dozen truths he knew when a child, such an one is a lie, as the world states it in set terms; and then, after a weary lapse of years, and plenty of hard-thinking, it becomes a truth again after all, as he happens to newly consider it and view it in a different relation with the others: and so he restates it, to the confusion of somebody else in good time. As for adding to the original stock of truths, — impossible! Thus, you see the expression of them is the grand business: — you have got a truth in your head about

the right way of governing people, and you took a mode of expressing it which now you confess to be imperfect. But what then? There is truth in falsehood, falsehood in truth. No man ever told one great truth, that I know, without the help of a good dozen of lies at least, generally unconscious ones. And as when a child comes in breathlessly and relates a strange story, you try to conjecture from the very falsities in it, what the reality was, — do not conclude that he saw nothing in the sky, because he assuredly did not see a flying horse there as he says, — so, through the contradictory expression, do you see, men should look painfully for, and trust to arrive eventually at, what you call the true principle at bottom. Ah, what an answer is there! to what will it not prove applicable? — "Contradictions? Of course there were," say you!

*Chiappino.* Still, the world at large may call it inconsistency, and what shall I urge in reply?

*Ogniben.* Why, look you, when they tax you with tergiversation or duplicity, you may answer — you begin to perceive that, when all's done and said, both great parties in the State, the advocators of change in the present system of things, and the opponents of it, patriot and anti-patriot, are found working together for the common good; and that in the midst of their efforts for and against its progress, the world somehow or other still advances: to which result they contribute in equal proportions, those who spend their life in pushing it onward, as those who give theirs to the business of pulling it back. Now, if you found the world stand still between the opposite forces, and were glad, I should conceive you: but it steadily advances, you

rejoice to see! By the side of such a rejoicer, the man who only winks as he keeps cunning and quiet, and says, "Let yonder hot-headed fellow fight out my battle! I, for one, shall win in the end by the blows he gives, and which I ought to be giving" — even he seems graceful in his avowal, when one considers that he might say, "I shall win quite as much by the blows our antagonist gives him, blows from which he saves me — I thank the antagonist equally!" Moreover, you may enlarge on the loss of the edge of party-animosity with age and experience . . .

*Chiappino.* And naturally time must wear off such asperities: the bitterest adversaries get to discover certain points of similarity between each other, common sympathies — do they not?

*Ogniben.* Ay, had the young David but sat first to dine on his cheeses with the Philistine, he had soon discovered an abundance of such common sympathies. He of Gath, it is recorded, was born of a father and mother, had brothers and sisters like another man, — they, no more than the sons of Jesse, were used to eat each other. But, for the sake of one broad antipathy that had existed from the beginning, David slung the stone, cut off the giant's head, made a spoil of it, and after ate his cheeses alone, with the better appetite, for all I can learn. My friend, as you, with a quickened eye-sight, go on discovering much good on the worse side, remember that the same process should proportionably magnify and demonstrate to you the much more good on the better side! And when I profess no sympathy for the Goliaths of our time, and you object that a large nature should sympathize with every form of intelli-

gence, and see the good in it, however limited — I answer, "So I do; but preserve the proportions of my sympathy, however finelier or widelier I may extend its action." I desire to be able, with a quickened eye-sight, to descry beauty in corruption where others see foulness only: but I hope I shall also continue to see a redoubled beauty in the higher forms of matter, where already everybody sees no foulness at all. I must retain, too, my old power of selection, and choice of appropriation, to apply to such new gifts; else they only dazzle instead of enlightening me. God has his archangels and consorts with them: though he made too, and intimately sees what is good in, the worm. Observe, I speak only as you profess to think and, so, ought to speak: I do justice to your own principles, that is all.

*Chiappino.* But you very well know that the two parties do, on occasion, assume each other's characteristics. What more disgusting, for instance, than to see how promptly the newly emancipated slave will adopt, in his own favor, the very measures of precaution, which pressed soreliest on himself as institutions of the tyranny he has just escaped from? Do the classes, hitherto without opinion, get leave to express it? there follows a confederacy immediately, from which — exercise your individual right and dissent, and woe be to you!

*Ogniben.* And a journey over the sea to you! That is the generous way. Cry — "Emancipated slaves, the first excess, and off I go!" The first time a poor devil, who has been bastinadoed steadily his whole life long, finds himself let alone and able to legislate, so, begins pettishly, while he rubs his soles, "Woe be to whoever brings anything in

the shape of a stick this way!" — you, rather than give up the very innocent pleasure of carrying one to switch flies with, — you go away, to everybody's sorrow. Yet you were quite reconciled to staying at home while the governors used to pass, every now and then, some such edict as "Let no man indulge in owning a stick which is not thick enough to chastise our slaves, if need require!" Well, there are pre-ordained hierarchies among us, and a profane vulgar subjected to a different law altogether; yet I am rather sorry you should see it so clearly: for, do you know what is to — all but save you at the Day of Judgment, all you men of genius? It is this: that, while you generally began by pulling down God, and went on to the end of your life, in one effort at setting up your own genius in his place, — still, the last, bitterest concession wrung with the utmost unwillingness from the experience of the very loftiest of you, was invariably — would one think it? — that the rest of mankind, down to the lowest of the mass, stood not, nor ever could stand, just on a level and equality with yourselves. That will be a point in the favor of all such, I hope and believe.

*Chiappino.* Why, men of genius are usually charged, I think, with doing just the reverse; and at once acknowledging the natural inequality of mankind, by themselves participating in the universal craving after, and deference to, the civil distinctions which represent it. You wonder they pay such undue respect to titles and badges of superior rank.

*Ogniben.* Not I (always on your own ground and showing, be it noted!) Who doubts that, with a weapon to brandish, a man is the more formidable? Titles and badges are exercised as such a

weapon, to which you and I look up wistfully. We could pin lions with it moreover, while in its present owner's hands it hardly prods rats. Nay, better than a mere weapon of easy mastery and obvious use, it is a mysterious divining rod that may serve us in undreamed-of ways. Beauty, strength, intellect — men often have none of these, and yet conceive pretty accurately what kind of advantages they would bestow on the possessor. We know at least what it is we make up our mind to forego, and so can apply the fittest substitute in our power. Wanting beauty, we cultivate good humor; missing wit, we get riches: but the mystic unimaginable operation of that gold collar and string of Latin names which suddenly turned poor stupid little peevish Cecco of our town into natural lord of the best of us — a Duke, he is now — there indeed is a virtue to be reverenced!

*Chiappino.* Ay, by the vulgar: not by Messere Stiatta the poet, who pays more assiduous court to him than anybody.

*Ogniben.* What else should Stiatta pay court to? He has talent, not honor and riches: men naturally covet what they have not.

*Chiappino.* No, or Cecco would covet talent, which he has not, whereas he covets more riches, of which he has plenty, already.

*Ogniben.* Because a purse added to a purse makes the holder twice as rich: but just such another talent as Stiatta's, added to what he now possesses, what would that profit him? Give the talent a purse indeed, to do something with! But lo, how we keep the good people waiting! I only desired to do justice to the noble sentiments which animate you and which you are too modest to duly enforce.

Come, to our main business: shall we ascend the steps? I am going to propose you for Provost to the people; they know your antecedents, and will accept you with a joyful unanimity: whereon I confirm their choice. Rouse up! Are you nerving yourself to an effort? Beware the disaster of Messere Stiatta we were talking of! who, determining to keep an equal mind and constant face on whatever might be the fortune of his last new poem with our townsmen, heard too plainly "hiss, hiss, hiss," increase every moment. Till at last the man fell senseless: not perceiving that the portentous sounds had all the while been issuing from between his own nobly clenched teeth, and nostrils narrowed by resolve.

*Chiappino.* Do you begin to throw off the mask? — to jest with me, having got me effectually into your trap?

*Ogniben.* Where is the trap, my friend? You hear what I engage to do, for my part: you, for yours, have only to fulfil your promise made just now within doors, of professing unlimited obedience to Rome's authority in my person. And I shall authorize no more than the simple re-establishment of the Provostship and the conferment of its privileges upon yourself: the only novel stipulation being a birth of the peculiar circumstances of the time.

*Chiappino.* And that stipulation?

*Ogniben.* Just the obvious one — that in the event of the discovery of the actual assailant of the late Provost . . .

*Chiappino.* Ha!

*Ogniben.* Why, he shall suffer the proper penalty, of course; what did you expect?

*Chiappino.* Who heard of this ?

*Ogniben.* Rather, who needed to hear of this ?

*Chiappino.* Can it be, the popular rumor never reached you . . .

*Ogniben.* Many more such rumors reach me, friend, than I choose to receive ; those which wait longest have best chance. Has the present one sufficiently waited ? Now is its time for entry with effect. See the good people crowding about yonder palace-steps — which we may not have to ascend, after all. My good friends ! (nay, two or three of you will answer every purpose) — who was it fell upon and proved nearly the death of your late Provost ? His successor desires to hear, that his day of inauguration may be graced by the act of prompt bare justice we all anticipate. Who dealt the blow that night, does anybody know ?

*Luitolfo* [*coming forward*]. I !

*All.* Luitolfo !

*Luitolfo.* I avow the deed, justify and approve it, and stand forth now, to relieve my friend of an unearned responsibility. Having taken thought, I am grown stronger : I shall shrink from nothing that awaits me. Nay, Chiappino — we are friends still : I dare say there is some proof of your superior nature in this starting aside, strange as it seemed at first. So, they tell me, my horse is of the right stock, because a shadow in the path frightens him into a frenzy, makes him dash my brains out. I understand only the dull mule's way of standing stockishly, plodding soberly, suffering on occasion a blow or two with due patience.

*Eulalia.* I was determined to justify my choice, Chiappino, — to let Luitolfo's nature vindicate it-

self. Henceforth we are undivided, whatever be our fortune.

*Ogniben.* Now, in these last ten minutes of silence, what have I been doing, deem you? Putting the finishing stroke to a homily of mine, I have long taken thought to perfect, on the text, "Let whoso thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." To your house, Luitolfo! Still silent, my patriotic friend? Well, that is a good sign however. And you will go aside for a time? That is better still. I understand: it would be easy for you to die of remorse here on the spot and shock us all, but you mean to live and grow worthy of coming back to us one day. There, I will tell everybody; and you only do right to believe you must get better as you get older. All men do so: they are worst in childhood, improve in manhood, and get ready in old age for another world. Youth, with its beauty and grace, would seem bestowed on us for some such reason as to make us partly endurable till we have time for really becoming so of ourselves, without their aid; when they leave us. The sweetest child we all smile on for his pleasant want of the whole world to break up, or suck in his mouth, seeing no other good in it — would be rudely handled by that world's inhabitants, if he retained those angelic infantine desires when he had grown six feet high, black and bearded. But, little by little, he sees fit to forego claim after claim on the world, puts up with a less and less share of its good as his proper portion; and when the octogenarian asks barely a sup of gruel and a fire of dry sticks, and thanks you as for his full allowance and right in the common good of life, — hoping nobody may murder him, — he who

began by asking and expecting the whole of us to bow down in worship to him, — why, I say he is advanced, far onward, very far, nearly out of sight like our friend Chiappino yonder. And now — (ay, good-bye to you! He turns round the north-west gate: going to Lugo again? Good-bye!) — and now give thanks to God, the keys of the Provost's palace to me, and yourselves to profitable meditation at home! I have known *Four*-and-twenty leaders of revolts.

# NOTES.

## The Return of the Druses.

**The Return of the Druses, Act I.,** opens upon an excited group of men who are exulting in the freeing of their people and the triumph of their religion. The day is dawning when their leader, Djabal, is to assume the incarnate divinity of the founder of the Druse religion, deliver their tribe from its bondage to the Knights of Rhodes, and lead it from exile in the Mediterranean island, which is the scene of the play, to the old home of the Druse people beneath the cedars of Lebanon.

While they exult, they begin to loot the hall of the Palace, quarrelling over their spoils, and fiercely telling of their hated Prefect's cruelty and lust, until Khalil enters and reproaches them for their paltry greed. Adjuring them to act with the caution and dignity befitting them as initiates in the Druse mysteries, he reminds them of their historic past, and the plan, not yet perfected, by which in exchange for the island they are about to leave, they are to secure the protection of Venice and foil the pending bargain of the knights to sell them to the Papal Nuncio. They retort that since Khalil and his sister Anael are supreme in Djabal's favor, and he can have whatever he asks, he need not begrudge them their lesser booty. Khalil's disinterestedness comes out in his reply, which checks them. All that he has asked is to be permitted to kill the Prefect. That deed, however, Djabal reserves for himself, after which, at noon, he will assume the godship. Meanwhile they are to hold the posts assigned them.

A Druse messenger entering announces the return from Rhodes of the unsuspecting Prefect, and in advance of him the Frank knight, Loys. At this return of Djabal's friend, Khalil expresses surprise, for he was the one knight worth saving and to spare him he was sent away. A second Druse messenger announces the approach of the vessel bearing the Papal Nuncio; a third, that the Venetian ships are coming in sight. In a rapture of excitement, Khalil is telling the people gathering about him of the approaching completion of the scheme, when Loys enters. In spite of the sudden silence he feels the general joy. He attributes it, at first, to the news he brings, that he has procured the dismissal of the Prefect and has been appointed in his stead, till he reflects that they can know nothing of this yet. He asks for Djabal, that he may tell him of it. Then he wonders at the home-feeling seizing him, a foreigner returning to dwell among this people, and is half ready to credit a story Djabal used to tell him of a Frank ancestor who allied himself with the Druses in the old crusading days in Syria. But apparently his ancestry has had less to do with it than Anael, the thought of whose dark eyes makes him so restless that he cannot wait longer for Djabal and goes in quest of him.

Act II. introduces Djabal, who enters questioning within himself the push of events which will force him to declare himself the re-incarnate Hakeem, for the sake of completing the task of his whole manhood. He persuaded Loys to pass his probation as a knight in the island, so that he could be helpful to him in gaining access to the Prefect; made himself powerful with his tribe by playing upon their credulity; used his skill to bring about the bargain with Venice and complete the plot to lead his people to Mount Lebanon; and now, for the first time, he rebels against the delusion of boasting any power but that belonging to him as a man, the son of the Druse Sheikhs, whom the Prefect had tried to extirpate, but who is saved to avenge the butchery of his family and

his nation's wrongs. He is resolving to crown his work by publicly abjuring imposture, when Khalil, entering, hails him as God-Hakeem, accepted by the whole Druse nation; announces that Prefect, Nuncio, and Venetian admiral are all upon their way to the island, and, last, that Anael desires to see him. This last is not least important to Djabal, for he recognizes Anael's influence upon him as the source of his sudden unwillingness to exalt himself falsely, and also of his fear, if he were to tell the tribe the simple truth, that he should not appear to advantage in her eyes. Turning to Khalil, he puts it to him why he, who had the will and ability to do all he has done, has never sought to deliver the Druses. Khalil answers that no appeal of his could rouse them. The faith in Hakeem alone united them, the fear of Hakeem alone prevented them from frustrating all, as he had just witnessed, by seeking some selfish prize. Djabal then bids him go announce him to Anael. To her alone, he thinks, as he goes out, may he confess the truth.

Anael then appears with her mother, who is helping her array herself in the ancient Druse costume, and whom she is questioning, over and over, about Djabal; how the divine change will come; how her mother hid him as a child, and saved him; how he returned as a man, unrecognized by them; how he heard her own vow never to wed but the one who should save her nation; how he had made himself known to them, at last, as their Sheikh's son and the predestined Hakeem who would work out all the events that had since come to pass. Her joy in being his bride is mixed with grief that she is unworthy of sharing in his divine exaltation, since she can feel no awe of him, and finds his merely human traits suffice her. As Djabal enters, she half confesses her trouble, but with such confidence, nevertheless, in his approaching change that he fears more than ever to tell her the truth, while she is, meanwhile, more than ever anxious to reveal the doubt visiting her ever since seeing Loys, that all she had accepted at first as

signs of his divinity arises merely from such human love as Loys might excite in one who loved him as she loves Djabal. As for Djabal, his tenderness for her drives him to think of another way out of his difficulty. To avoid falsity, and yet save her soul the shock he supposes it will be to her to give up the idea of the Hakeem, he will leave the island, foregoing his vengeance on the Prefect, the sole deed now requiring his hand, and so let her keep the faith that uplifts her. Loys, the only one who could undeceive her, is out of the way, he says to himself, just as Khalil entering announces him, — the very man they both dread. To Anael his coming is a challenge to her to prove her doubts. To Djabal it is a threat of exposure and failure in his mission. To keep Loys away from the people, since a word about the Hakeem would rouse his scorn, he proposes that Anael shall greet his old friend before he meets him. She agrees to do it, taking it as a sign that he has divined her thoughts and is offering her an opportunity to test her doubts.

**Act III.** opens upon the interview of Loys with Anael. He has revealed his love for her, and she is bidding him leave her, yet with such confusion excited by his words, on account of her conscious comparison of him with Djabal, that Loys is misled. When he learns from her that she is vowed to wed him who saves her tribe from the Prefect, which he knows he has already done, he realizes only, although he is bound by his vows of knighthood not to marry, that the same day which was to see him take those vows may be the one to sever them. So, when Anael tells him that Djabal, whom he wanted to see, will soon be there, he feels that he cannot meet him yet, he must find the Prefect, see the Nuncio, save himself somehow from breaking faith. As he rushes away, Anael acknowledges to herself that for her Djabal is but a man whose love she balances with Loys' and chooses. Her probation failing then to assure her of Djabal's divinity, there is but one other desperate way left her to test her faith.

Djabal returns to her, to bid her farewell, with his plan formed to entrust Khalil with the leadership and lure Loys to silence. She superstitiously asks him if he can read the unnamed thought that has been filling her soul. He assures her he cannot. Fired, then, with this secret way to test her faith in him, it is to her for the moment as if it were done, and with an outburst of love she begs him to embrace her, who is vowed not to embrace him till her tribe be saved. Djabal, overwhelmed, reminded that it is now his purpose to forego both the crowning act and its reward, falters, "My Anael, is the Prefect dead?" Although he cannot guess it, this is to her a reproach that she who would die for her mother or her brother, has yet to meet death in a more awful shape for Djabal's sake. All she says clearly, however, of her desire to prove her faith merely makes him recur to his farewell. This, too, Anael supposes is due to her lack of faith in him, while of course he is only tortured with the necessity of parting from her before the Prefect can arrive and prevent his going. Khalil breaks in upon their cross-purposes to warn Djabal that the Prefect is close at hand, the posts manned, and all in readiness for him to strike his blow. Fate cries out. Djabal hurriedly settles the duty of each, giving Anael his ring as the sign to be given, when the Prefect is slain and the Venetians landed, for his guard to throw open the gates. They separate.

The Prefect now enters, gayly ordering all his men back to the galleys. Now Loys is to take his place away from him, he has but to leave. He chuckles over the happy prospect, gradually letting the astonished Loys understand the connivance of the knights in his oppressions, and the service he has so unexpectedly rendered him in opening a way of escape with his spoils from his perilous fat-office. He assures Loys that he now enters the palace, thanks to him, for the first time in years without fearing assassination. The disillusioned Loys finds one ray of comfort from all this. He will renounce his knighthood and throw in his lot with Anael's people; and with this in mind, he goes at last to tell Djabal his news.

**Act IV.** reveals Djabal with his sword awaiting the light-hearted Prefect. He hears footsteps within, dashes the curtains aside, and discovers — Anael. The Prefect's blood is on her dagger. This was the secret test she had assigned herself. In exaltation she calls upon Djabal, now, to declare his divinity and hers. But he, overcome with this result of his duplicity, can only tell her the truth. Her revulsion is extreme; but after a moment her love conquers. She will go with him and publish truth to the people and love him more than ever. But his pride draws back. She waits only to be assured that he intends to feign to be Hakeem, and leaves him. Loys rushes in to pour out his long-withheld news and his fresh news also, that he will not be a knight, but become a Druse, since he and Anael love each other. Before his tale is finished the Nuncio's guards enter with alarms of the Prefect's murder. They seize Djabal and accuse him. Loys defends him, till Djabal throws down the bloody dagger and acknowledges that their story of the conspiracy and the assumed incarnation as Hakeem is true. But Loys will not believe that Anael and Khalil are mixed with it, and that she is Djabal's bride, and when the guards draw back, learning how perilous their own position is, and urge him to claim the protection Djabal offers, he scornfully refuses it and defies him.

To his contempt Djabal only replies that he will stab himself if one Druse accuses him.

**Act V.** The Druses flock into the hall. The Nuncio comes forward with his guards, and adroitly does his best to shake the faith of the uninitiated Druses who have answered the summons Anael has prematurely given. They are wavering, when Khalil and his band of initiates enter with word that the Venetians are coming, which startling news still further quickens the Nuncio's wits, and he proceeds to undermine Djabal by calling on him for miracles, and threatening the Druses with the punishment the Venetians will administer when they learn the truth. An outburst from Djabal shows his mettle, and

the Druses close about him again till the Druse who warned the Nuncio is brought in veiled to bear witness against him. Khalil indignantly tears the veil away and reveals — Anael.

Loys, exulting that she alone was true, makes an impassioned appeal to her, and then summons Djabal to make his. But Djabal only makes quiet acknowledgment to Anael that he deserved her betrayal and submits to her punishment. He regrets, he says, yet is scarcely able to repent, a course that grew out of his love for her and the conflict of his Arab instinct and his Frank brain. He knows now that out of the clash his mere man's-nature rises strengthened, to love her as he never loved before. He awaits from her lips his doom, ready himself to execute it. Thinking she hesitates from pity, he helps her decision, calling aloud upon the people to draw near and hear the doom.

Thereupon, with one cry "HAKEEM!" as if the inner truth of the mystery of the human through love incarnating the divine were laid bare before her gaze, Anael falls dead. The Druses worship Djabal; Khalil piteously begs him to have mercy and restore his sister's life. And the Nuncio's scepticism loses strength to struggle with his flock as the Venetian trumpets sound, and the Druses shout to Djabal, "Exalt thyself!"

As if inspired, Djabal boldly scourges them with his scorn of their exactions, and reproaches them with what has actually been done for them. Anael and he shall henceforth, he tells them, be beyond their ken. Then, making them promise to follow Khalil to Lebanon, he puts them under Loys's protection, and, turning where Anael lies, stabs himself, and as the Venetian admiral enters, dies shouting, "At the Mountain, Druses!"

**Act I. 3.** *Dread incarnate mystery:* the Incarnation, the central religious idea of the Druses, is held in a very subtile form. The unity of God, and the impossibility of comprehending his nature or assuming to designate his attributes, is their ground of faith. To suppose that

he becomes flesh is not permissible, therefore ; but only that manifestations of him appear from time to time, assuming a veil of flesh, as a man would put on a robe ; and just as a man does not become that robe, so these different forms of manifestation do not become the Humanity of God, but that manifestation throughout all these forms or envelopes is essentially one, coeval with the Divinity of God. All Messiahs and religions are accepted by the Druses as types more or less complete of the one true religion ; and they hold that there have been ten incarnations or apparitions of the divine manifestation, including Hakeem, the last of these, and the founder of the Druse religion ; but it is the Hakeem or one immutable essence which has taken all these forms.

4. *To resume its pristine shape :* the expected reappearance of the Hakeem in the form of the founder of the Druse faith, the Khalif Hakeem Biamr Allah. He belonged to the dynasty known as the Fatimites, from Fatima, Mohammed's daughter, and wife of Ali, whose leadership of the Faithful, after the death of Mohammed, was disputed by Ayesha, Mohammed's wife, and her supporting chiefs Abou Bekr, Othman, and Omar, who were successful in seating Moawia, first of the line of the Ommiades. These two parties represented, also, a spiritual division of the Mohammedans, the Druse faith growing ultimately out of the more mystical and spiritual interpretation of the Koran, and gaining valuable admixtures of Hellenic, Jewish, Christian, and Persian elements through the circumstances conducing to its evolution. Early in the ninth century, the Fatimite branch of the Mohammedans asserted themselves successfully against the ruling house, and took possession of Egypt, in 968, establishing their capital at Cairo. Hakeem was the first of the Fatimite Khalifs to be born there. He began his reign in 996, and in 1016 promulgated his new religion in the mosque at Cairo under the ministry of Darazi (who was afterwards sent to Lebanon to plant the new religion there, and who is sometimes supposed to have given the

Druses their name), and of Hamze, a Persian mystic, who is believed by the Druses to be the manifestation of the first of God's creations, the Universal Intelligence, accompanying the manifestation of the Divinity in Hakeem.

5. *The Khalif vanished erst:* Hakeem disappeared in 1021. It is said that he rose at daybreak for his customary ride on his donkey, and on leaving the palace embraced his mother, saying that according to his horoscope he should that day run a great risk, but that if he escaped he would live for eighty years. With two attendants he took the road to Mount Karafa, his favorite resort. Having reached the summit, he drew rein and looked up to the stars, saying, "We all belong to God, and shall all return to him." Suddenly striking his hands together, he cried, "Fatal sign, thou hast appeared then!" He never returned to Cairo, and various tales were told to account for his disappearance; among these, that his sister had him assassinated. This was likely, as he was rigorous against intemperance and sensuality, and particularly despotic in his ordinances against women, which his pleasure-loving sister resented. The Druse version of the occurrence is that he departed for a time to test the Faithful, and would come again to establish the true religion. Along with the insane and Nero-like acts which history records of this Khalif, other deeds are told which are creditable. He opened a college in Cairo which was free to the public, and founded a library which supplied paper, ink, and pens, as well as books, to all comers; and he handsomely rewarded scholars in all branches of law, astronomy, medicine, rhetoric, and grammar, for the public lectures which he had them give. He proclaimed tolerance of other religions, and was austere in his own life, suggesting the possibility to the modern reader that his unpopularity and historical ill-fame may have been due to his moral superiority.

7. *Red Mokattam's verge:* the mountain Kharifa, or Mokattam Jebel, on the eastern bank of the Nile, near Cairo. Red with the rising sun when the Khalif disappeared.

9. *The Christian Prefect that enslaved . . . us sad Druse exiles:* the oppressive rule of the Knights of Rhodes over Druse colonists who fled from Osman (see lines 86-90) to an island of the Sporades, seems to be an ingenious invention of Browning. An outbreak of the Druses against the Maronites, their Christian neighbors in Lebanon, took place in 1843, the date of the publication of the drama, and doubtless called Browning's attention especially to this strange Arabic people, an ethnological puzzle, doubted to be Semitic. Their mixed blood and faith, supplying a basis for an eclectic nature and religion, would be likely to interest him especially, and suggest to him that here was an opportunity to put in significant juxtaposition the European and the Oriental natures, and the Christian and Druse ideas of the Incarnation. The plot he invented still further betters this opportunity, and makes use of historic facts in a likely, although probably unhistoric way, as to minor details. The same Moslem uprising under the Moguls which drove the Christians, crusading Franks, and Knights Hospitallers from Jerusalem and Antioch in the thirteenth century, was, as a matter of fact, turned against the Druses, whose policy of tolerance had permitted them to live in Syria in friendly relations with the Christians when they were in power, but whose outward observance of the rites of Mohammedanism, which they interpret allegorically, was not acceptable to the Turkish conquerors. The Druses refused to build mosques and strictly observe the Koran, and took up arms in defence of themselves against the invaders. They were defeated and reduced to submission, and in time, pursuing the usual tenor of their way, returned to the isolated place and wealth they enjoy. But many families emigrated at this time; and this actual occurrence Browning makes use of, to settle them on an island under the protection of their old neighbors who were driven out of Palestine by the same enemy, but who were too strong not to take the opportunity to oppress the Druse exiles.

20. *The Druse Nation, warders on our Mount of the world's secret:* as already indicated, the Druses claim to keep inviolate the inmost spiritualized religion, and especially as to the doctrine of the Incarnation, — of which all other religions more or less partaking of the truth, are considered but external types. They preserve the faith with the greatest secrecy, only the initiated Druses, called the *Ockals*, possessing knowledge of it. All are bound, however, to keep the following seven commandments of Hamzé, which, indeed, bear witness to the superiority the Druses show: 1. "The unity of God, or the infinite oneness of Deity; 2. The essential excellence of truth; 3. The law of toleration as to all men and women in opinion; 4. Respect for all men and women as to character and conduct; 5. Entire submission to God's decrees as to fate; 6. Chastity of body and mind and soul; 7. Mutual help under all conditions." The Druses believe that their religion may be allegorically discovered in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, and they treat with reverence the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Gospels, and the Koran.

Copies in Arabic of the jealously guarded Druse writings were secured for the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, in Paris; and of these Silvestre de Sacy made use in his "Exposé de la Religion des Druses," published in 1828, and doubtless consulted by Browning. C. H. Churchill's "Mount Lebanon," 3 vols., London, 1853, seems to be the best English authority.

38. *Eight-point cross of white flame:* the Knights of Rhodes wore a white cross of eight points on a black ground, known as the Rhodian Cross. Earlier they wore a plain white cross on a red ground. They took Rhodes in 1310; before that being known as the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem.

86. *Osman:* or Othman I., founder of the present Turkish Empire, originally a petty chieftain in Bithynia. He invaded Nicæa in 1299, and took possession of the whole country in 1331, establishing the Mogul supremacy.

**108.** *A race self-vowed to . . . warfare with his hordes:* when called Knights of St. John, they installed themselves (1042) at Jerusalem, holding it against the Moslems.

**116.** *Sheikhs able to thwart*, etc.: of the Sheikhs, or Emirs, of the Druses, Churchill says: "The names of a long line of Emirs occur in the Arabic manuscripts, who excelled, some as poets, theologians, and grammarians; others as astrologers, artificers, and historians, making large collections of books," and multiplying them by beautiful penmanship. Reading and writing was common, even among the women, the Druse harems being remarkable for their superiority over other Oriental women.

**132.** *Patriarch:* a church dignitary, superior to archbishop in rank.

**152.** *Candia:* now Crete, bought by Venice, 1194.

**177.** *Nuncio:* the Pope's ambassador, or agent, in this case sent to be bishop and governor.

**217.** *A Crossed-keys' flag:* the insignia of the Pope, the keys of heaven and hell held by Peter's line.

**284.** *Rennes:* the chief city of Bretagne, now the capital of the Ile Vilaine district in France.

**291.** *Bretagne:* the province of Brittany, in the northwest of France.

**319.** *Pro fide:* for the faith.

**359.** *Some Count Dreux:* to the Chinese, Persian, Arabic, Egyptian, Jewish, and Hellenic strains of blood and faith ascribed to the Druses, the Frank and Christian strain is added by a tradition, which has been questioned, and said to have been invented in the sixteenth century. Mr. Gamaliel Bradford, in his paper on this drama in the "Boston Browning Society Papers," speaks of it as "anachronistic as used by Browning," apparently forgetting that if it be assumed to be true, it would have been placed in the past by the speaker here. Browning's use of it as an old tale in which the fancy is tempted to believe is a clever compounding with scholarship for a realistic touch.

**360.** *Bouillon's war:* the first Crusade, led by Godfrey, Duke of Bouillon (1060–1100), who took Antioch and Jerusalem, calling himself "Defender of the Holy Sepulchre." See Tasso, "Jerusalem Delivered."

**II. 81.** *Sweet cane: Acorus calamus. — Lilith:* Adam's first wife, according to Oriental and Talmudic tradition.

**166.** *Incense from a Mage-king's tomb:* referring to the Oriental superstition that the ashes of magicians exhale perfume revealing tombs where treasures are hid.

**177.** *Saffron vestures:* saffron dyes were highly esteemed by the Orientals, as by the early Greeks, and the color sacred to ceremonial use.

**183.** *Khandjar:* Eastern dagger.

**III. 172.** *Some new expiatory form:* an allusion to the Oriental belief in the transmigration of evil souls into the bodies of beasts after death, pure souls passing into angelic shapes.

**271.** *San Gines by Murcia:* near the Mediterranean bay of Murcia, a few miles from Cartagena in Spain.

**286.** *Bezants:* Byzantine gold coins.

**300.** *Red-cross rivals:* the Knights Templar, an order vowed also to the service of the Holy Sepulchre, founded in 1118 and suppressed 1312. Called Templars because they occupied an apartment in the Christian palace at Jerusalem near the Temple. Browning's "Heretic's Tragedy" deals with an episode in their history resulting from the Church's displeasure in their sympathies with the Orientals.

**IV. 64.** *Bahumid:* Moktana Bohaeddin, a Druse who re-stated and reduced to writing the principles of Hamzé.

**294.** *Mahound:* the form of Mohammed's name used by the Christian Crusaders.

**Act V. 8.** *The office of Hamza:* that of manifesting the Universal Intelligence accompanying the manifestation of the Divine in the Hakeem, of minister to the God.

**12.** *Copht:* an Egyptian from the old city of Coptus.

**42.** *The third Fatemite:* Hakeem or Biamrallah was the third of the Fatimite Khalifs.

57. *Romaioi, Ioudaioite kai proselutoi:* the Greek text of Acts ii. 10, "Strangers of Rome, Jews, and proselytes."

155. *Truncheon:* from the same root as *thyrsus*, meaning a stalk or staff, and a sign of office, here on behalf of the Church.

379. *Cedar-blossom:* a token of Lebanon, from the famous cedars growing there.

392. *St. Mark . . . the Lion:* the patron saint of Venice, whose emblem was the lion, which was accordingly the emblem of Venice; hence the name of the famous square in Venice and the statues of the lions.

## A Blot in the 'Scutcheon.

**A Blot in the 'Scutcheon.** Act I. is introduced by a scene representing a group of men-servants crowding at a lodge-window to get a good view of Lord Mertoun and his train, who are entering their master's mansion near by. They gossip over the cause of the Earl's visit, — his suit for the hand of Lord Tresham's sister, comment on the way the house-servants play their part in the formalities, and chaff the only one among their number who shows no eagerness to see the ceremonies nor to rejoice with them in this gala-day, although he has been one of the most faithful retainers of the house, and is especially favored by the young Lady Mildred.

The scene next passes to the mansion itself, where Lord Tresham is welcoming the Earl. The young man proffers his name and fortune with due formality but without emphasis, treating these externals as incidental matters, and asking that to his true self Lady Mildred's hand may be given. His frank and high-minded speech commends him peculiarly not only to Lord Tresham, but to his cousin Guendolen, about to marry his brother Austin, and to whom she comments aside, throwing upon the scene the light of her penetration as well as giving it the wit and grace of a little by-play. Tresham in his reply

expresses his prepossessions in the Earl's favor, but reminds him that his sister's hand is hers to give or refuse. Mertoun pressing him to say if he may have his word if she grant hers, Tresham draws out the admission that he has chanced to catch a glimpse of the lady, and knows how beautiful she is, Tresham thereupon commenting that he cannot know how beautiful are her heart and mind, and showing his own peculiar fondness and esteem for his sister. Although to control her is out of the question, he says, she has ever of her own motion anticipated him in the satisfaction of his desires for her, and he can only say that his own heart is ready to urge Mertoun's suit with her. Reassured of the brother's favor, after arranging that the lady appoint a day when he may wait upon her, Mertoun leaves. The sole criticism Austin and Guendolen agree in making upon him is his foolishness in the solicitude he showed to please the brother instead of the bride herself; but Tresham is altogether delighted with him, and coaxes Guendolen to persuade Mildred to set the very next day for receiving him.

In Mildred's own chamber that evening Guendolen is considerately offering the freest gratification to the young girl's supposed curiosity about her handsome young suitor; but although there is no trace of opposition, and a tell-tale exactitude of knowledge is called forth as to the color of his hair, she shows no disposition to avail herself of her opportunity to ask questions, and, on the plea of weariness, begs to be alone. Her relief when her cousin goes is unmistakable, and as she lifts the small lamp hanging in front of the stained-glass window, so that its rays may fall through a purple pane, it is not long before the window is softly opened and a young man's voice is heard singing a love-song in a low tone. He throws off his slouched hat and long cloak as he enters. It is the Earl, joyous with the result of his meeting with Tresham. The dialogue between Mildred and the young man soon reveals that they have secretly known and loved each other, and that he is eager to consummate their union publicly with-

out betraying the intimacy which has followed upon the chance meeting in Tresham's Park of the motherless girl and the romantic boy. But Mildred shrinks, even more than he, from the deception this involves, and the part of virgin purity she must assume. She almost doubts her lover's reassurances of the honor in which he holds her, and is only dissuaded by her love for him from abandoning all attempt to gain a happy future life together, so apprehensive is she of the evil their past will work them. They part fixing their last secret meeting for the following night.

**Act II.** opens upon Tresham agitatedly leading Gerard, the sullen old retainer of the opening scene, into his library, where he shuts the door and orders him to repeat circumstantially the tale he has just been telling him of seeing a man enter Lady Mildred's chamber, at midnight, for at least a month past. He tells his story over; how he first saw him leaving the chamber in broad moonlight, descending the yew-tree, and how he always waits before entering for a signal from inside — the lamp lifted to the purple pane. Gerard meets Tresham's suspicious questions and curt interruptions with details, and with so much reluctance and affectionate shamefacedness that the struggle he has had between his loyalty to the house he and his fathers have served and his devotion to his young mistress is obvious, and his evidence against her the more convincing. Tresham, left alone, is stunned by the blow, and incapacitated to see his way out. As Guendolen enters, he pretends to be absorbed in a book, but does not succeed in blinding her clear eyes to his misery. She hits at once, half jocosely, but half seriously, upon the core of the difficulty, that what she would fain hope has come to pass, — that he has found some blot in the Earl's 'scutcheon. She has come to tell him of her visit to Mildred's room the night before, and to bring him the assurance that Mildred will meet the Earl as soon as he desires. Tresham breaks in to bid Mildred to come to him at once, afterwards covering Guendolen's surprise at his authoritative

manner with some pretence of just having found in an old book the Italian passage Mildred and he were hunting for. When Mildred enters she notices that the book he holds is Latin, and she meets her brother's wild talk with a foreboding heart, finally, herself bidding him speak plainly. To his question she replies without a word in self-defence, and only by expressing her readiness to endure any punishment and her eagerness to die. She will not tell the name of the man. Tresham, smitten with shame and grief, is ready to love and shield her, if he could see any way to reconcile with her acknowledgment of guilt the message sent by her order to summon the Earl to come on the morrow. But when she replies that she will still receive him, as she said, with a furious burst of indignation, he calls aloud for Austin and Guendolen, and in their presence curses and denounces her not merely as a sly wanton, loving yet faithful to her low bond, but as one who would inveigle an unconscious, trusting youth into union with one he falsely supposes to be chaste and good. As he rushes out, and Mildred falls, swooning, Austin is about to follow, till with an outburst of spirited loyalty to Mildred, Guendolen recalls him to her side. She reminds him that he, a soldier, is vowed to fight for his king, right or wrong; and she declares that he would be unworthy to be beheld by the meanest dog that would faithfully follow *him* were he hooted at and disgraced before a crowd, if he, realizing what he did, should forsake a death-white woman whom he could help, "let alone a sister, let alone a Mildred." With Guendolen's assurance that two friends are ready to love her and believe in her, Mildred softens a little. Guendolen bids Austin leave them till she calls him, and then lovingly invites and tempts Mildred's confidence. She still withholds the name, but is trapped into confessing how much she loves him, and when she is asked how then she could permit them to talk to her of the Earl, her evasion, "There is a cloud around me," is met by Guendolen's sudden intuition that Lord Mertoun and her lover are the

same. After this she gains further assurance of it adroitly by waking Mildred's fears for him. She calls Austin, who returns saying that Thorold has gone. They take Mildred to her room, and setting out to find Tresham seek to forestall the evil they all fear.

Act III. Tresham, wandering through the woods and over the grounds trying in vain to lose himself, brings up once more beneath the yew-tree before Lady Mildred's window. As midnight strikes, he remembers the tryst kept there, and attributes to woods and river the fatal force that lures him there to wait the lover's coming. Mertoun enters heavily cloaked. He waits below until the light is moved and shines out at the purple pane, and then prepares to ascend the yew-tree. The enraged Tresham stops him, and with his hand gripping his throat orders him out into the moonlight. Mertoun is first to recognize his foe, who demands that he declare himself. Mertoun begs Tresham not to insist; but he is inexorable, his indignation redoubling when Mertoun throws off his disguises. Raging at the deception they have practised, and deaf to Mertoun's entreaties to forbear for Mildred's sake, he forces the younger man to fight; but it is only a show of resistance. He soon falls. Too late, Tresham hears the whole piteous story from Mertoun's dying lips of his romantic admiration for him as the ideal gentleman, of his longing to ally himself with him, of his desire to right as well as could be the wrong unwittingly done him, and of his deep love for Mildred. He bids Tresham tell her that his last words were, "I love her," and Gerard, Austin, and Guendolen barely enter before he dies.

The closing scene shows Mildred in her room in a stupor of grief, waiting vainly for her lover's coming. She cries to heaven to break the hideous apathy by any means or any messenger, when Tresham enters. He is sad and gentle now, acknowledging that he took upon himself that morning an office not his to take, and he begs his sister to forgive him for his words to her. Startled at the

change in his manner, she falters at first, then, starting up, demands of him why Mertoun has not come to her, and dashing aside his mantle points to his empty scabbard, exclaiming that he has murdered him. Must she pardon that, too? She does. She is able to think how very wretched he must be. She forbids him to tell her Mertoun's last words. She knows them, and expects death will soon permit her to take them from his own lips. Facing heaven herself, she does not indeed forgive, but blesses her brother, and, falling on his neck, she calls on Henry Mertoun to confirm the love she gives from him. She dies with her arms about Tresham, as Guendolen and Austin enter in time to prevent him from falling, under the influence of the poison he has taken, and to hear his last words: "Vengeance is God's, not man's. Remember me!"

4. *Poursuivant:* advance messenger or herald, from the French *poursuivre*, to follow along with; hence a follower or attendant.

13. *Bravery:* showy dress and equipment.

44. *A cast of Swedish hawks:* a couple of hawks; *cast* being the term, in the technical language of falconry, for the two birds cast or flung off together into the air in hunting, the original sense of "to cast" being "to fling."

45. *A leash of greyhounds:* three, held in line by one leash or thong.

59. *Proper:* comely.

93. *No herald more:* the office of the herald being to arrange all the minutiæ of public ceremonial occasions.

Sc. ii. 16. *He's the king's:* he serves the king, belongs to the army.

59. *Thicks:* thickets, an old English form of the word.

60. *Eyass:* a young hawk, derived from the French *niais*, callow, or half-fledged. Shakespeare uses the word literally, and also with reference to the young of birds, in "Hamlet," ii. 2. 355.

127. *Faith give fraud the mercy-stroke:* let sincerity put an end to fooling. The mercy-stroke was the quietus or death-stroke after torture.

130. *Blazon:* the heraldic device or bearings of a coat of arms.

133. *Mildred is fourteen, remark:* Dr. Rolfe and others have criticised Browning for making Mildred Juliet's age, the precocious maturity of Italian blood being supposed unnatural for an English girl. As to the point that an English lord would not arrange for the marriage of a girl of fourteen, it can be answered that only two generations ago in this country marriages at fifteen and sixteen, although perhaps exceptional, were not unknown, and customs in England in the early part of the eighteenth century afford similar cases. As to the lore with which she is imbued, if it is remembered that a fond brother so speaks of her, who apparently devoted much time to her in his library and who read with her (see Act II.), there is no difficulty which Mildred's exceptional nature and advantages could not explain. Tresham's account of her (I. ii. 83), "Control 's not for this lady," and Guendolen's climax (II. 340), "let alone a Mildred," with other indications throughout, contribute towards a portraiture of an unusual and yet an unworldly-wise and girlish nature.

Sc. iii. 25. *The Conqueror:* William the Conqueror, who invaded England in 1066, and to whom the noble families of England go back to date their pedigrees and titles.

27. *Bow-hand or the arrow-hand:* the left hand, which holds the bow, or the right, which sets the arrow.

46. *Paladins:* knights, so called, from the Italian *paladino*, palace attendants of rank.

67. *That fair dame whose garter slipped down:* the Countess of Salisbury, who is said to have dropped her garter while dancing at a ball; the King of England, Edward III., picking it up and noticing that some of the courtiers laughed, restored it to the Countess, saying, "Honi soit qui mal y pense" (evil be to him who thinks evil). He afterward instituted the Order of the Garter,

with this for the motto, as an incentive to chivalry among his knights; and the order still remains one of the first in fame in Europe.

**116.** *Expressless:* not to be expressed, a word of Browning's coinage.

**150.** *Some cursed fount that should spirt water, and spouts blood:* see Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar," ii. 2. 76.

**187.** *Diamond scales:* sensitively poised scales, such as are used to weigh diamonds and precious gems.

**203.** *Bower:* private room or chamber.

**217.** *Fight-mark:* the device or favor worn in a warrior's crest, and by which he was known in battle. This form of the phrase is Browning's.

**Act II. 43.** *Pale:* fence.

**73.** *Hind:* peasant, from Anglo-Saxon *hine-man*, a farmer.

**113.** *No longer back than Arthur's time:* Guendolen goes as far back as to the King Arthur of legend to pretend ironically that this is a recent date to such a treasurer of honorable pedigrees as Tresham.

**150.** *Latin surely . . . here's a line*, etc.: Ovid, Metamorphoses, vi.

**180.** *The turtle's voice*, "*Arise, and come away*": Solomon's Song, ii. 10–13.

**277.** *Bacchant:* a votary of Bacchus, the god of wine and joy.

**313.** *Losels:* worthless fellows, lose-alls.

**Act III. 23.** *Surcoat:* a coat worn over armor, from French *sur*, over, *cotte*, coat.

**24.** *Wimple:* a kind of plaited hood.

**219.** *Like some fabled crime . . . lets loose a Fury:* the allusion to the Greek tragedies, such as the Oresteia of Æschylus, in which the avenger of the sin of the house is pursued by the Erinnyes or Furies, is appropriately put in the mouth of Tresham, the proud avenger of a blot in his ancestral escutcheon, and who now fancies that the ancient trees his fathers knew have let loose upon him such a Fury as pursued Orestes.

223. *Antiphony:* an anthem chanted in verses responsively.

Sc. ii. 4. *Diffused:* accented on the first syllable, as often in Shakespeare and other elder English poets, when the verb is used adjectively.

102. *Had gleamed some inlet:* an inversion of subject and verb, "some inlet had gleamed."

137. *Foredone:* overcome, old English; "done for" in modern speech.

139. *Masque:* masquerading company, or band of actors.

150. *Gules:* red, the name of the color in heraldry. Blood overspreading the escutcheon and washing away the blot.

## Colombe's Birthday.

**Colombe's Birthday. Act I.** The centre of interest, at the opening scene, is a letter which Guibert, one of the courtiers, is reading, while the others gather curiously about him. The news it brings apparently concerns the Duchess, and Guibert's reluctance to acquaint her with it is so strong that he is proposing to throw up the office by virtue of which he must be the one to present this paper to her. As he tosses it down, Maufroy, the youngest of the courtiers, unable to contain his curiosity, picks it up and reads aloud enough to show its purport. It is from Prince Berthold, and announces that he is coming that day, with approval of Pope, Emperor, and Kings of Spain and France, to lay claim to the Duchy of Juliers, as its rightful owner, under the Salic law. This news that Colombe, whom they had crowned on her birthday, just one year ago, with profusion of compliment and loving ceremony, has no longer any power, throws the little circle into a panic of selfishness. How to get out of telling Colombe is Guibert's trouble. Clugnet's solicitude is to do it in a way to serve himself. Gaucelme's anxiety is by means of it to ingratiate himself with the new master. They notice the emptiness of the

audience chamber, crowded a year ago. They learn that one suitor is waiting there, who has a petition he is eager to present, and who named Guibert as having promised his influence to admit him. As this man enters impetuously, forcing his way past the sentries, and making himself known as Valence, the advocate of Cleves, whose wrongs he would urge the Duchess on her birthday to redress, and as Guibert is recognizing in him the lawyer whose skill once restored his estate to him, Gaucelme whispers a suggestion. Here is the chance to dispose of Prince Berthold's letter. Guibert hesitates, but finally arranges with Valence to admit him to make his plea as fully as he likes, on condition that he gives the Duchess that paper, saying he is bidden to present it to her.

**Act II.** reveals the Duchess with her waiting woman, who, out of her love for her mistress, is doing all she can to delay her from beginning her birthday reception, lest she realize too brusquely by the change in the homage paid her how her fortune has changed. Colombe herself suspects it while she hides it, resenting being summoned to the throne, through no desire of hers, only to be unseated, and defiantly holding to her prerogatives. The courtiers enter, reassuring her with the usual ceremonials; Valence stands rapt with the pleasure of again beholding the lady whom he saw the year before when on her birthday coronation progress through Cleves to her palace. As Guibert introduces him to her attention, he spurs himself to think only of Cleves, and he makes a frank and moving appeal to her on behalf of the weavers and spinners, of whose wrongs he brings a formal recital. The Duchess thanks him, and asks for the paper which he is about to give her, when he remembers his promise to present Guibert's paper, and explaining that he had so agreed, presents that one. The Duchess, on reading it, turns reproachfully to the courtiers, and submitting with dignity, takes off her coronet. So soon as Valence sees the trick they have played upon him, an outburst of indignation at the outrage he has unwittingly

done against the lady is succeeded by a challenge, which Guibert springs forward to accept, the courtiers holding him back, and reminding him that he is a noble and may not meet the clothier's spokesman. The irony of the Duchess's comment at this brings Guibert on his knees before her, protesting that because of their love for her they could not bear to present it, and it seemed good, therefore, to make a "nameless man," who was ignorant of its contents, its bearer.

Valence has already so borne himself that the Duchess is disposed to resent so slighting an estimate of him, and when he now calls upon her to abjure her rule over such creatures as these of the court and put trust in the loyalty of the people, she meets it by setting the coronet upon her head again, returning Berthold's missive with contempt, and half playfully yet with queenliness taking away from her wavering courtiers their badges of office, and constituting her one loyal subject, Valence, as Marshal, Chancellor and Chamberlain in their stead. Amid expressions of admiration from Guibert and the Court in general for their Duchess's spirited action and Valence's disinterested valor, the Prince's arrival is announced. From their temporary seizure of esteem for the virtue they lack, they lapse into agitated discussion of the best way to welcome the new ruler. Valence alone is summoned to the Duchess to serve her in her need.

**Act III.** introduces Berthold and his friend, Melchior, who comments cynically on the ambitious train of conquests which occupies the Prince and in which the possession of Juliers is but a passing step. Berthold explains that it is an important one, however, and that once it seemed to him the summit of desire, so that while a boy trying to gain from foreign courts some interest in his claims, he had dreamed he might attain it by gaining the hand of Lady Colombe. Melchior's opinion is that if he himself unaided had pressed his way along at the little Court towards such a fruition as this, it would have exercised his powers more happily than the way he has taken,

whose sanction rests, not on mind now, but on the physical force embodied in the potentates he has won over to his design. Berthold questions there being any mind power to cope with in Juliers, and as the courtiers enter, Melchior is retorting that he has himself prescribed the manner of his reception in bringing troops against the city; mind has departed, doubtless, and only such flesh and blood as is about to front him now in the shape of these smug courtiers, find his argument through force a strong one. Melchior goes out, bent upon the book-domain he is engaged in conquering, leaving Berthold musing over his criticism of the material course his ambition has chosen, and also over a certain little adventure in mere loving he once undertook, comparing the two, and concluding that success and failure mean the same in either. Meanwhile the courtiers are filing in and taking their places about him. Their proffer of loyal service he receives thanklessly, since they can scarcely choose to do otherwise, and Guibert is keen enough to see the poor figure their drifting policy makes them cut in comparison with the self-determined course of Valence. When Berthold understands that they do not represent the Duchess, he is still more contemptuous of them, and tells them that his sole interest is in the reply the Duchess has to make. Guibert answers, despite the outcries of the obsequious courtiers, that the Duchess has scorned and defied his claim. Berthold is startled; for he has preceded his soldiers, until that moment, seeing only assurance that all were eager to forsake the sinking for the rising power. Recurring to Melchior's words, he conceives himself to be about to face the subtler force of mind, and he remembers that in the old love-affair he was recalling a moment before, he had failed, through not taking account of the subtler forces of human nature. The Duchess and Valence enter. Berthold asks her whom she empowers to speak for her. She refers him to Valence, who, admitting that she is alone, adds that therein she finds her strength, the people of Cleves hold-

ing with her, moreover, and, though the Prince subdue them and be their despot, they will never choose him as their Duke. Berthold receives this answer with respect, only proffering the papers that prove his claim in reply, and asking that the Duchess may pronounce upon their worth. As he goes, the courtiers whisper together over the scene, watching with envy the love budding between Valence and the Duchess. She decrees that he shall look over the papers, judge the Prince's claim, meet the Prince that night, and afterwards herself. She then withdraws with the most unmistakable expression of her confidence in him. Valence, left alone, keys himself up to meet worthily the crucial test before him, to give a disinterested answer, in case Colombe prove of right to be Duchess and no mate for him.

Act IV. discloses the envious courtiers discussing the situation from a point of view made clear to them by the Chancellor, that if Colombe marry a subject she will not ennoble Valence, but lose her right to Juliers. They propose to tell the Prince that her marriage with Valence will insure him the duchy, and they go to arrange the details of the disclosure, as Valence enters with Berthold's credentials. He finds them incontestable, and can scarcely contain his joy in the prospect that, without any swerving from the path of honor, he may indulge his love for Colombe, when Berthold enters. He comes before the advocate can have had time to acquaint her with his decision, in order to propose a more amicable way of settling the disputed claim by offering her his hand. To that offer, instead of to his claim which he withdraws, would he have the lady's answer that night. Valence, scarcely recovered from his consternation when the Prince leaves him, has barely time to question his own heart in face of this unexpected test of his faith in her, when the Duchess enters. She guesses from his manner that what she feared is true, — her rights prove void. Valence launches out into an eloquent description of the Prince's lot, and the spiritual worth of the worldly power he may

wield when he shall reach the goal of his aim and become Emperor. Colombe has dreamed of such a fortune, he finds, and of being allied with it; whereupon he declares that this fortune is hers to realize through Berthold. Then she, secretly testing Valence and delighting in the honor and fairness of his presentation of Berthold's offer, takes it for granted that the Prince loves her. Valence, with strict truth, here as before, declares he did not say so. If he had offered both love and power, he would scarcely dare desire, for the world's sake, that she refuse. But his act shows the love which he did not affirm, she suggests. This pushes him to declare it is not love, because he (Valence) knows what it is to love. Gradually encouraging and questioning him concerning this love of his which has given him such insight, she enables him to declare himself to her without revealing herself to him. Although in her soul rejoicing in the plea he finally makes for mere love against power, she only answers formally that he is to say that she has received the Prince's message and prepares her answer. He withdraws disconcerted. The Duchess, left alone, expresses playfully her jubilant pleasure in being thus unexpectedly queen of the situation, reserving her decision till she has proved Berthold's nature, too.

**Act V.** opens upon a dialogue of Berthold with Melchior, who is probing the Prince's offer to find how much of tenderness instead of policy inspires it, and counselling him that he will prosper best in his suit if he put the lover in the foreground instead of the Emperor. When the Duchess enters, the Prince rests his case frankly on mutual esteem and advantage, but is unpleasantly startled by the suggestion the courtiers make, who break in upon him at this point, to tell him that she forfeits the Duchy in his favor, anyway, if she marry a subject, and that, since Valence could have no other motive for such defence of the Duchess as his than love's reward, their marriage is an obvious fact. Again the courtiers unexpectedly find themselves in disfavor with Berthold, who

resents their prattle about one who is their lady, as he declares, to their surprise. To the Duchess, then, who appreciates his generosity, and even suspects him of being capable of letting her keep her duchy and wed as she likes, he turns, urging that she write upon his credentials her admission of them as Colombe of Ravestein, or, as his wife, leave them unadmitted, and so let all end. The Duchess agreeing, the Prince takes his success for granted, and Valence, who holds the paper, is sent for. Melchior, meanwhile, gets the Prince's permission to work out for himself the experiment of testing whether the Empire or Love should win, and stops Valence long enough to try the nobility of his love, by explaining to him that a rumor has reached them that the lady's hand is considered to be due him for his service to her. If this be true, the Prince would not only withdraw his suit, but the lady be compelled to accept that of Valence, wherefore his witness is desired. Which shall it be, her good or his? Valence answers for hers, making no claim upon her save as she wills, and, speaking for himself alone, declares that love is self-purifying and uplifting, finding within itself its own recompense, and desiring only the good of the beloved one. Handing, then, the paper to the Duchess, she subscribes it, and, turning to Valence, offers him, as befits a birthday, and a wedding-day as hers is too, any gift he desires. Berthold confirms this, declaring, for her sake and his own, he shall have whatever he asks. After a struggle he presents the petition of Cleves to the Prince, asking him to redress its wrongs, and, receiving Berthold's promise, is preparing to retire, when Colombe bids him finish his task and read aloud that which she has written on the paper. He reads: "I take him — give up Juliers and the world. This is my Birthday." Berthold applauds the choice, owning that he needs the duchy more than they do; yet he turns wearily to his successes, while they are too much absorbed in each other to listen to him.

I. II. *Our old Duke*, etc.: this incident seems to be an

imagination of the poet, which he has found a place for in the environment furnished by the historical disputes over the succession to the Duchy of Cleves. Duke John William of Cleves died in 1609, without leaving a direct heir. His domain, including the formerly separate duchies of Jülich, Cleves, and Berg, and territory on both sides of the Lower Rhine, was claimed by not less than six competitors, the Emperor sending the Archduke Leopold of Hapsburg to hold it for him, and the Kings of France and Spain and the people of Holland concerning themselves about it in the interest of Catholic or Protestant contestants. These disputes were settled in 1614 by the treaty of Xanten, giving the duchy to Sigismund, elector of Brandenburg, who had married the late Duke's niece. Browning's supposition, on which the plot is based, that the Duke had concealed his child to shield her better and secure her reign surreptitiously, is conceivably historical, though not a matter of record.

14. *Castle Ravestein:* an old castle in the little town of the same name on the river Meuse in North Brabant.

17. *Juliers:* the French form of the name of Jülich, chief town of Aachen, on the right bank of the river Roer, sixteen miles northeast of the town of Aachen or Aix-la-Chapelle. It was supposed to have been founded by Julius Cæsar, and to be the Juliæum mentioned in the "Antonini Itinerarium." Until recently, when its fortifications were demolished, it was a fortress of the second class.

34. *Gentles:* the use of this word as a noun, for "gentlefolk," is Elizabethan. See Shakespeare's "Love's Labor's Lost," iv. 1.

72. *Guilder:* a Dutch coin worth about 40 cents.

84. *Salic law:* an ancient law, one clause of which, relating to the inheritance of landed property, excluded females from heirship in land, and was construed, also, to exclude them from thrones. It is supposed to have originated with the Salian Franks, the name being derived from the river Yssel, called Isalia in the Middle Ages; in

the Rhenish province, on the borders of France and Holland, which is the scene of this play, it is in place appropriately, as a factor in the plot invented by the poet.

129. *Coil:* turmoil. See "Tempest," i. 2. 207.

163. *Pill and poll:* to peel and shear, an Elizabethan phrase.

175. *Crowding:* a misprint of the editions of 1885 and 1889, for *crowning*, as, in the earlier edition, Browning wrote to Dr. Rolfe.

177. *Cappings:* that is, taking off their caps.

207. *Halberts:* or halberds, an ancient weapon used for both cutting and thrusting, a combination of spear and battle-axe.

222. *Cleves:* formerly the capital of the duchy of that name, a city two miles from the Rhine and near the Dutch frontier. Its old castle, still standing in the midst of the town, the Schwanenberg, is the scene of the Lohengrin story of the Swan and the Knight, celebrated in Wagner's opera. It is still a manufacturing town, having linen, cotton, silk, and woollen industries, and a population of 10,000.

254. *Pentecost:* the Jewish feast, following the Passover, the Christian equivalent of which, Whitsuntide, is frequently called Pentecost.

275. *The Pope's cross:* the badge of membership in the order of knighthood conferred by the Pope.

297. *From Cleves to Juliers:* about sixty miles.

342. *Sursum corda:* "Lift up your hearts," the versicle used by the priest when he prepares to consecrate the bread and wine in the Mass or Communion.

353. *Marcasite:* a mineral product which is a bisulphide of iron.

II. 75. *Devoir:* duty, from the French verb *devoir*, to owe.

165. *Church-flowers:* flowers gathered to adorn the altar and be used in the service of religious ceremony, instead of the life of nature. Colombe has been plucked away from her normal life, similarly, to adorn civic rites.

171. *God's Mother:* the Madonna, or Virgin, whose image adorns the shrine sacred to her in all Catholic churches. It is historically a fact that the old Duke, whose duchy occasioned such dispute at his death (see note, 11), was a Catholic, although his subjects were largely Protestant. Colombe seems to have been brought up in familiarity with Catholic customs.

207. *A lion crests him:* the device his crest bears is a lion.

208. *His 'scutcheon's word:* the motto on his coat of arms.

III. 2. *Cologne:* the ancient and important city of Köln on the left bank of the Rhine, formerly capital of the electorate of the same name, and for a long time one of the most important of the towns belonging to the Hanseatic League.

3. *Aix:* Aix-la-Chapelle, where the emperors of Germany were formerly crowned.

4. *Frankfort:* Frankfort-on-the-Main, where the Roemerberg palace is, in which the emperors of Germany were elected and crowned, and the Diet assembled. — *Milan:* capital of Lombardy, where the Crown of Italy was conferred, as at Aix and Frankfort that of Germany. — *Rome:* as the most celebrated of European cities, the centre of imperial rule over the whole world, and the goal of ambition, it stands here as the summit of Berthold's desires in a career modelled upon the Emperor Charlemagne's. See lines 39 and V. 117.

10. *Seneschal:* the steward of a castle or barony.

63. *Œconomy:* the old way to spell *economy*.

67. *Treves:* the ancient Augusta Trevisorum, and Trier of modern Germany, in the valley of the Moselle. Its archbishop was an elector of the German Empire, and the city, therefore, an important one to gain.

71. *Amelius:* an Italian philosopher of the third century belonging to the Neo-Platonic school.

108. *Truncheon:* staff of office.

261. *A pillared flame:* Exodus xiii. 12; Numbers xiv. 14.

353. *Emprise:* adventurous enterprise, from Old French *emprise*.

IV. 1. *How spring this mine:* referring to Guibert's wish, III. 203, leading to this petty plot of the courtiers.

154. *Burgraves, Landgraves, Markgraves:* the Graf or Count of a burg, being called a Burgraf, etc.; hence the German titles Burgraf, Landgraf, and Markgraf, Englished as above.

157. *Chrysoprase:* a choice variety of chalcedony, green in color.

186. *Luitpold's brazen self:* evidently referring to a bronze statue of this ancient Duke, Valence standing stock-still like it.

V. 117. *Charlemagne:* the great Emperor of the Franks (742–814), the exemplar of Berthold's dreams.

380. *Barnabite:* of the order of St. Barnabas.

## Luria.

**Luria. Act I.** Braccio, the Florentine Commissary, through his secretary, Lapo, is sending, on the morning of a decisive engagement between Florence and Pisa, an account of the situation gathered from a report just being concluded by Puccio, Luria's lieutenant-commander. The dialogue reveals that Puccio, having been superseded in the chief command by Luria, has been disposed to carp at his conduct of the war, upon slight occasion, and that Braccio has made the most of this in his despatches, until now, when, seeing how sure of triumph Luria's plans are, the old soldier is moved to praise him unreservedly. At his bidding, Braccio dictates to his secretary, Lapo, such a message as would lead Florence to give their general the highest rewards; but as soon as Puccio goes out, Braccio tears the paper, and, although even his devoted secretary protests against his policy of distrust of Luria, which has brought it about that Luria is secretly being tried and is about to be sentenced by the city he is so successfully serving, Lapo

makes an appeal for the reversal of his doom in vain. Braccio almost admits that he agrees with Lapo that the love of this Moorish Luria for Florence is his religion, yet cannot find it wise to trust an alien's disinterestedness when such successful supremacy of importance has proved too much even for Florentines to withstand. Not on the charges by means of which he has made a semblance of a case against him and induced the Signory to carry on the trial, does he himself set weight. The petty errors noted by his discontented rival, his courtesy to the enemies' general, his attachment for Domizia, whose desire to make use of him to avenge on Florence the punishment it bestowed on her father and brothers, causes him to be suspected, — all these, useful as they have been with the Signory, do not count with the astute Braccio. What does count is his distrust of any grosser force than mere intellect in the rulership of Florence. He, who is really the moulder of the will of Florence, having resolved that only intellect shall dominate her course, decrees the death of Luria. Luria, entering with Domizia, hears his name, and shows a shrewdness soon effaced by almost childlike talk of the approaching battle, his love of Florence, and his jealousy of the peace he will be the means of bringing about which will make him useless to her. After arranging with Braccio that he will only wait till noon for the allies from Lucca to come up, and then join battle, he artlessly questions him if he is not afraid to trust him with the army at his back when peace comes. Instead of disarming Braccio, this only confirms him in his plot against him, and the letter prepared is despatched in duplicate by two messengers.

Act II. discloses Domizia rapturously anticipating, in the triumph of Luria, the moment when Florence will fall upon him as it did upon the heroes of her family, and when he, enraged the more by this contrast with the rewards she has been filling his ears with, will take the revenge of a hireling on the ungrateful city that betrayed its native-born chiefs. Learning from Luria, who enters

with his faithful Moor, Husain, that the Pisans have sent an envoy, whom he is about to see, she goes out. After Husain describes the envoy, he also goes out, but not before expressing fiercely his fear of the cold Florentines, who distrust one another, Puccio being made a tool of by Braccio, Domizia seeking to entrap the Commissary, all selfishly using Luria, who loves them all, and whom he adjures to beware of them. The envoy who enters is Tiburzio himself, the Pisan general, whose allies have not come, and who knows that his position is desperate. He carries one of Braccio's duplicate letters, which he has intercepted. This he urges Luria to read and save himself, offering him Pisa to serve, if he will abandon perfidious Florence. He admits, however, when Luria puts it to him, that he, as a Pisan general, would expect no more from his own city, but he considers that Luria is not bound to Florence as he would be to Pisa, because the Moor is foreign-born. Luria proposes to test his Florentine friends before deciding, and arranges that Tiburzio shall sound his trumpet, when, if his own does not sound the answer, it will be the sign that he accepts the Pisan offer. Luria, left alone, rates Tiburzio's friendship and this offer at their fullest value, and yet decides to trust Florence. When Braccio, Puccio, and Domizia enter, he shows them the unopened letter. Chance, he tells them, has put it in his hands. Shall he open it and learn his reward before fighting? Braccio replies, Yes, if he serve for pay alone, and get his just desert. Domizia cries, Open and take revenge. Tiburzio's trumpet sounds. Luria declares that he will clench the obligation they relieve him from. He tears the paper, and orders Puccio to bid his trumpets answer the Pisan challenge to battle.

**Act III.** Puccio is reporting to the secretary the result of the victory Luria has just won, making the most of his impetuousness and the necessity to conquer the allies who will come up, later, as faults. Braccio, entering, confers once more in secret with his secretary; still, despite his

admiration of Luria's recent action and Lapo's belief in him, pursuing his policy of distrust. The victorious general, coming in with the others, after rejoicing in the acknowledgments he elicits from them of his good service to Florence, asks Braccio for the contents of the letter. What, now, is his reward to be? The Commissary frankly admits his past course, maintaining that Florence is justified in trying Luria, and, as a state, in ruthlessly testing or destroying any individual life. Puccio, learning thus, for the first time, how his grumbling has been turned against his leader, protests, and Domizia openly expresses her triumph in learning that the issue between Luria and Florence has been forced. So, from all his Florentine friends Luria gains a revelation of their double dealing toward him. Tiburzio, having been taken prisoner, enters, to bear witness to the trust with which the alien has met their distrust. He now offers Luria the generalship of his forces, — the situation not being so desperate for Pisa, now that the soldiers from Lucca arrive, — leaving to Florence her army, and taking from her only the leader she is about to execute, and to whose rectitude he will himself bear witness in Florence. Braccio seeks to extricate himself from this net by appointing Puccio general in place of Luria, but Puccio refuses, and Luria, master of the situation, declares his pleasure. Until night, when his sentence is to arrive, he will not rebel; then he will punish Florence. He frees Tiburzio, meanwhile; gives Braccio safe conduct through an army that would rend him in bits, at a sign, if it knew his conduct, and pardons the subtle Domizia.

**Act IV.** The secretary, discussing with Puccio what Luria's course is likely to be, learns that he is thoroughly awake, now, to his own pettiness and the trickery it has subserved, and so confident both of Luria's worth and power that the prospect for Florence looms darkly. As they pass out, the Moorish general enters with Husain, who is rejoicing in the departure of the Florentine spies and the devotion of Luria's men, and ardently urging

him to seize his supreme opportunity and take revenge upon Florence with both armies. As he passes out, Domizia comes in to urge her view of the course for him to take. Not for revenge nor from love of power let him now abolish Florence, but to read corporate life the lesson of humility befitting it before the great individual souls that have nurtured it, and to save such soul growths of the future from blight. Luria concludes, when he is left alone, that he is set not to serve the purposes of others, but his own, and that it would scarcely serve his own soul to destroy its allegiance to its highest dream of Florence. Taking a phial of poison from his breast, he drinks to the salvation of Florence.

**Act V.** Luria is charging Puccio with his plans for Florence, which he is about to bequeath him to carry out, when he succeeds him in the chief command. Puccio reminds him, if he is meaning, after submitting himself thus to Florence, to enter Pisa's service, that these plans, which all tend to make Florence supreme, will not be acceptable to his new mistress. When Luria disclaims any such intention, and declares that he has secured a friend potent to save him even from the ruin Puccio fears that Florence will yet wreak upon him, then Puccio, appreciating the value of these plans, and the famous career Luria's ability will open out to him if he adopts and has the name of originating them, refuses to take such honor from the one who deserves it, and proposes to tell Florence the truth about Luria in such a way as to reinstate him fully. Thanking him, and accepting it conditionally, Luria sends for Jacopo. To Jacopo Luria bequeaths another care, if, on consideration, his judgment approve — to investigate the condemnation under which Domizia's heroes rest, and if it is undeserved to exonerate them. Jacopo agrees, declaring, however, that testimony scarcely weighs with him now, since he holds no longer with Braccio and the instructed brain, but with Luria and the leading of the heart he has exemplified. As Jacopo goes, and Luria delights in still

another conquest for faith in good, Domizia enters to add her witness to his transforming influence, and Luria learns, too late, not only that she might reward his love, but would comprehend and further his soul's task of thrilling with Oriental fire the slow, cool Western brain. Last of all, Florence recognizes his loyalty. Husain enters, announcing Tiburzio. He tells Luria that he has cleared his probity at Florence, and Braccio himself, who comes with him, now testifies to Luria's purity of heart. He summons him to begin a new career, wherein every prophecy of his may be fulfilled, save one, — that he would punish Florence. "That also is done," cries Husain, pointing to Luria, dead before them.

**Dedication.** "*Wishing what I write may be read by his light*": a citation from the dedication prefixed by John Webster to his drama of "Vittoria Accorambona, or the White Devil." Browning adapts it slightly to his own use in referring only to Shakespeare and Landor, by making Webster's "*their* light" — namely, Shakespeare's, Dekker's, Heywood's, and others' — "*his* light."

**6.** *The Signory:* the Council of ten governing Florence.

**10.** *Pisa:* its situation eight miles from the mouth of the Arno, on which Florence also was built, made it of importance for Florence to control as its seaport.

**11.** *The Lucchese:* the soldiers of Lucca, which city, distant fifty miles eastward, was attached to the cause of Pisa at this time, because hopeful of regaining its independence from the dominance of Florence, and also because it had been united a century earlier with Pisa under Castruccio.

**15.** *Luria holds Pisa's fortune in his hand:* Luria's generalship in the successful war of Florence against Pisa, in 1406, is not historical. Professor Henry M. Pancoast, in his papers on "Luria," in *Poet-lore*, vol. i. p. 555, and vol. ii. 19, was first to point out the passage, in Sapio Amminato's History of Florence, which, doubtless, suggested to Browning the plot and the characters he developed from this hint: "When all was ready, the

expedition marched to the gates of Pisa, under the command of Conte Bartoldo Orsini, a Ventusian captain, in the Florentine service, accompanied by Filippo di Megalotti, Rinaldo di Gian Figliazzi, and Maso degli Albizzi, in the character of commissaries of the commonwealth. For although we have every confidence in the honor and fidelity of our general, you see it is always well to be on the safe side. And in the matter of receiving possession of a city . . . these nobles with the old feudal names! We know the ways of them! An Orsini might be as bad in Pisa as a Visconti, so we might as well send some of our own people to be on the spot. The three commissaries, therefore, accompanied the Florentine general to Pisa." (Bk. xvii.)

Luria, if not true historically, as a hired foreign warrior, one of the mercenary captains frequently employed by the Florentines, and ever, as a matter of policy, regarded with suspicion and beset with spies, is typically true to the Italian life of the time.

27. *Commissary:* commissioner or representative minister of state.

61. *Lapo:* Braccio's familiar name for Jacopo.

121. *Did he draw that?* one of the plans offered for the completion of the Duomo was for such a Moorish front as Luria is here made to draw. Mr. Ernest Radford unearthed the sketch in a small museum in Florence. His letter about it Dr. Furnivall sent to Browning, who answered that he "never heard nor dreamed there had been any such notion at any time of a Moorish Front for the Duomo — it was altogether a fancy of my own illustrative of the feelings natural to Luria and Braccio, each after his kind."

123. *The unfinished Duomo:* the famous church of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence, begun in 1294 by Arnolfo; its dome by Brunelleschi in 1420; its façade not begun until 1875, and completed in 1887. The famous Campanile or bell-tower of Giotto detached from it adjoined it.

**176.** *Remembering her whole House's fall:* in his paper on "Luria," in *Poet-lore*, vol. vi., and the "Boston Browning Society Papers," Mr. J. W. Chadwick suggests that Browning may have found the prototype for the punishment of the Traversari, Domizia's father and brothers, Porzio and Berto (see **II. 22-38, III. 291-292**) in the fate of the Albizzi, rivals of the Medici, in 1397. The Albizzi fought the battles of the republic of Florence for her, and extended her dominance over Tuscan cities, and after fifty-three years of prominence were accused of treasonable acts, and suffered exile or execution.

**383.** *As the Mage Negro king to Christ the babe:* possibly alluding to one of the pictures of the Adoration of Christ by the Magi or wise men of the Orient, which, as early as 1406, were numerous in Florence. See Matthew ii. 1–11.

**II. 265.** *Broke the bread and given the salt:* referring to the superstition prevailing among the Arabs that only with genuine friends may one eat salt.

**IV. 25.** *Our city authorizes . . . Luria's removal and transfers the charge:* the chief command of the Florentine forces was twice transferred during the war of 1406 with Pisa, Jacopo Salviati making way for Bertholdo Degli Orsini, and he being ordered for the rapacity of which he was accused to resign his command to Obizzo da Monte Carelli.

**201.** *Him who first ordained . . . Florence . . . should be:* Dante's Alighieri (1266–1321), the poet and patriot, whose dreams for Florence influenced her predominance in Italy, and whose share in remodelling her government after the revolution of 1293 was active. He was made prior in 1300, and led several important embassies for her before his banishment.

**203.** *Him a star, too, guided:* Beatrice Portinari, Dante's guiding spirit in his soul's progress, described in his Divine Comedy. Domizia, having at last realized Luria's individual worth, would preside over the aspirations of his spirit as Beatrice over Dante's.

**V. 27.** *Pesa . . . Lupo*, etc.: the river, town, and heights mentioned for the erection of a chain of towers and fortifications mark the third enclosure of Florence, completed in 1300.

## A Soul's Tragedy.

**A Soul's Tragedy. Act I.** Eulalia, expressing to Chiappino, at nightfall, her growing anxiety over the lengthening absence of her betrothed, Luitolfo, who had left them that afternoon to go to the Provost's house, and objecting to Chiappino's unconcerned silence, elicits from him an outburst of bitter resentment of his position. He, who is friendless and proscribed, and forced by circumstances to accept benefactions from his fortune-favored friend, Luitolfo, feels within himself the superior clear-sightedness and power of speech of one not tempted by conditions to temporize with social wrongs. He has been bound to silence, he complains, since he would not lie. But now, although Eulalia significantly bids him to keep silence, then, he pours forth his protest against his obligations to be grateful; against his friend's sunnier disposition, and more patient political policy under the despotism of their town's Provost; and, finally, against Eulalia's indifference to his love for her, now expressed, for the first time, in a domineering way, with scorn for her love for Luitolfo as a mere matter of habit. Eulalia, meanwhile, although she declares she never loved him nor guessed that he cared for her, and although she resents his manner and his interpretation of Luitolfo, lets him talk, and listens to him, apparently unwilling to trust her own intuitions, lest she do an unfortunate man and a friend Luitolfo rates high an injustice. She tells him, however, that his hard judgments arise from his failure to understand the circumstances in relation with which the persons whom he condemns act, and that under similar circumstances he would do the same. He declares himself above all such bartering of his soul's liberty for any material good, when the loud

knocking of Luitolfo interrupts them. Eulalia is alarmed. Chiappino mockingly supposes that he has been horribly frightened because the Provost, in his intercession with him for a mitigation of Chiappino's sentence to be exiled, has shrugged his shoulders. Luitolfo rushes in disordered, and with blood upon him, and Chiappino accounts for it, at once, by supposing that he has been hurt by the Provost, and that this is but what he should have expected of his temporizing. He (Chiappino) will go do justice upon the despot, at once. Luitolfo then announces that he has just killed him. The guards are after him. Let them save themselves. The crowd is seen thronging in front of the house. Eulalia refuses to leave Luitolfo, and is bidding Chiappino to go, when he brings out the passport procured for his own flight that night, gives it, with his disguise, to Luitolfo, and forces his escape. Chiappino declares that he will take Luitolfo's place and die for him, receiving now Eulalia's admiration, though she finds it easier to die so nobly than to stand the stress of living in grief. They turn to meet not the guards, as they suppose, but the populace come to hail their deliverer from the Provost's yoke. They recognize Chiappino, take it for granted that he killed the Provost, and greet him as their Chief. He does not undeceive them. Eulalia's eyes challenge him to declare the truth. He makes her a temporizing answer.

**Act II.** opens in the market-place with a dialogue between a stranger, who is really Luitolfo in disguise, and the by-standers, from whom he hears the news and no good of himself. They tell him that Luitolfo was probably killed on the same night that the Provost was slain by their noble Chiappino. Luitolfo suggests that he may only have retired to his country-seat, where he could keep track of events, hear how the Provost was only wounded, after all, and how Chiappino himself is likely not to turn out to be a second Brutus the elder. It comes out further in the course of their talk that the papal legate, who came into town the next morning after the uprising

of the people, has been gradually able to effect so much of a change in Chiappino's views that he who had always protested against the office of Provost is that morning to have it conferred upon him, rumor adding, also, that he is to succeed to the estates and the betrothed of his dead friend, Luitolfo. The disguised Luitolfo, withdrawing, says to himself that he now less than ever understands Eulalia's letters. She has written him as if Chiappino were in some danger, and he, therefore, has left his retreat without her knowledge and against her express injunction that he stay until some experiment of hers is concluded. Is he being tricked? He will see them both, he decides, before distrusting them. They enter. Eulalia is saying good-by to Chiappino, and he is defending himself from what she calls the change in his principles, but which he declares is merely a wise use of material at hand to build up his better political system. If she cannot understand, it is, indeed, as well for them to part. Has his love, too, changed? she asks slyly. He answers that it has widened. He does not now confuse the distinction between an intellectual desire and a sensual instinct. How is it with his friendship, then, queries the subtle Eulalia, for him to whose deed he owes his present position? He declares that the deed is really his, since he would have done it intentionally, while his friend did it blindly. It belongs to the person who can make use of it, as he will. The Legate entering, a dialogue follows between himself and Chiappino upon the reconciliation of his professed republican principles with his appointment to the provostship, at the end of which it comes out that, besides the submission to Rome involved in accepting the office of Provost, there is a stipulation that he punish the assailant of the late Provost, if he be discovered. Ogniben then publicly announces, as Chiappino falls back aghast, that the new Provost desires to hear who caused the death of the last one. Thereupon Luitolfo avows his deed. Eulalia unites herself with him, explaining to Chiappino that she was determined to

justify her choice of Luitolfo as he has just enabled her to do. The Legate concludes the play by good-naturedly bidding Luitolfo to retire to his own home, and cynically directing Chiappino to the text, "Let whoso thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

**Act I. 2.** *Ave-bell:* the bell rung about half an hour after sunset (and also at dawn), as a sign to the people to repeat the *Ave Maria*, or Hail, Mary.

**60.** *The holy-water drop:* from the little vase of water, consecrated by the priest, placed in the vestibule of Catholic churches to dip the finger in, before crossing oneself.

**72.** *Gauntlet-gatherer:* one who takes up the gauntlet or glove thrown down by an enemy as a gage or challenge to battle.

**94.** *Faenza:* a little city, anciently the Faventia of the Romans, twenty miles southwest of Ravenna. — *They send here a provost from Ravenna:* it was governed by Rome, through Ravenna, at this time (see **II. 91**), it having been annexed to the Papal States in 1509 by Pope Julius II. It now belongs to the Kingdom of Italy, being annexed in 1860, and has a population of over 22,000. Ravenna, about twenty-five miles from Faenza, famous as the exile- and burial-place of Dante, was seized by the Venetians in 1441, and ceded by them, in 1509, to the Pope. It was annexed, also, to the present Kingdom of Italy in 1860.

**218.** *Œconomy:* same as "economy," with the older English spelling of *œ* instead of *e* for the Greek diphthong *oi* beginning the word (as in "Colombe's Birthday," **III. 63**), used here to mean the general make-up or orderly arrangement of the parts of the face which discontent had put out of order.

**231.** *The Lugo path:* the way to Lugo, a town ten miles northward.

**281.** *Scudi:* old Roman gold coins nearly equalling the dollar in value.

**332.** *Trip-hook, thumb-screws and the gadge:* imple-

ments of torture. The trip-hook, like the trip-hammer, probably arranged to swing back and forth; and the gadge a club or goad studded with spikes, though neither is described in the dictionaries; the thumb-screws arranged to compress the thumbs.

340. *Argenta:* a little town half-way on the road northward from Lugo, towards Ferrara, thence *past San Nicolo:* on the road westward, diverging towards Bologna, perhaps making the escape a little indirectly to be safer, and thence northward again to *Ferrara:* twenty-six miles northeastward from Bologna, and finally to *Venice:* an independent republic, where one would be safe from pursuit.

II. 41. *Brutus the Elder:* Lucius Junius Brutus, whose father and brother were assassinated by Tarquin, King of Rome, and who escaped their fate by feigning idiocy. Biding his chance, he roused the people against the Tarquins, drove them from Rome, and established a republic. His disinterestedness here, and in putting his own sons to death, when discovered in an attempt to restore the monarchy, is contrasted with Chiappino's self-seeking.

49. *Dico vobis:* I tell you.

58. *St. Nepomucene:* or St. John Nepomuck, the patron saint of Bohemia, whose capital is Prague.

95. *Cur fremuere gentes:* the first verse of the second Psalm in the Vulgate or Catholic version, "Why do the people rage?"

104. *And, having had a little talk with him:* this is the first hint that the Legate knew beforehand who wounded the Provost. Knowing it, it is evident that he would be prepared to distrust Chiappino, and expose him, and, as the event shows (see line 654), to let off Luitolfo leniently.

422. *Advocators of change:* those who advocate change, the obvious meaning. Dr. Rolfe points out that the word in this sense is Browning's own.

449. *Young David*, etc.: 1 Samuel xvii. 17, 18.

**497.** *Bastinadoed:* cudgelling the soles of the feet, a common Oriental punishment.

**509.** *Profane vulgar:* Horace, Odes, iii. 1. 1.

**653.** "*Let whoso thinketh he standeth,*" etc.: 1 Corinthians x. 12.

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